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ROBERT CECIL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, 1866-1867

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "ROBERT CECIL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, 1866-1867" submitted by Stanley Edward Gooch in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

This enquiry has made use of fourteen articles written by Robert Cecil in the Quarterly Review between 1860 and 1867 which deal with the subject of parliamentary reform, and his speeches to the House of Commons on the same subject. These two sources disclose his views on parliamentary reform and democracy and suggest certain themes which dominated his political philosophy.

The nineteenth century saw great political, economic and social change, considered "progress" by many. While Robert Cecil saw evidence of "progress" in many of the changes, he was strongly opposed to political reform which would eventually democratize his country's Constitution. Largely judging from the American experiment he maintained that the likely outcome would be an end to the balanced Constitution and a situation in which one class, the working class, would violate the sanctity of property, destroy individual freedom, elect none but demagogues and those offering "claptrap" pledges, and give free rein to those who wished to remove the House of Lords and the Established Church. In order to guard against such a disaster, he urged his countrymen to elect the Conservative

party which was pledged to stand against democracy.

When the Liberals introduced their Reform Bill in 1866 Cecil was a leading Conservative opponent of the measure. After the Conservative Government, of which he was a member, introduced a stronger measure the following year, he resigned on the grounds that he did not think their plan wise and he could not sanction the political morality that permitted Conservatives to reject party principles when it became expedient to do so. He felt that the party's leaders, Lord Derby and Benjamin Disraeli, were responsible for this policy and bitterly criticized them. Even though his point of view had many supporters in 1866, for various reasons it had relatively few a year later.

However, Cecil did return to lead his party in a period of a democratized Constitution. Although his governments were quite active in the field of social legislation, he continued his defence of English institutions. To Cecil's surprise he found that a broadened electorate proved a responsible supporter of the values which he held.

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INTRODUCTION

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil was the second son of the second Marquis of Salisbury. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, he entered the House of Commons in 1853 as a member for Stamford, a pocket-borough controlled by Lord Exeter. In 1866 on the death of his elder brother he gained the courtesy title of Viscount Cranborne and two years later his father's death made him the third Marquis of Salisbury.¹ His family had come into political prominence three centuries previously with the great career of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who was an important minister for Queen Elizabeth. Burghley's second son, Robert, added to the family fame by serving James I. For this he was awarded the titles Viscount Cranborne² and Earl of Salisbury. Although in subsequent generations the Lords Salisbury were relatively obscure politically, in the late eighteenth century the title was elevated to that of Marquis. Thus Robert Cecil was an authentic aristocrat in an age when his class no longer monopolized political life.

As the Marquis of Salisbury, Robert Cecil had a great political career, including three terms as Prime Minister and four as Foreign Secretary. While some attention has been given to Salisbury's work in foreign affairs,

and a similar amount to Conservative policies of the Victorian twilight, little has been given to the attitude of the Conservative Prime Minister who held office under a democratized Constitution though, in 1867, he had been the foremost member of his party to resist broadening the franchise. It is of obvious interest to find out if his Conservatism remained consistent throughout.

Following Robert Cecil's death his son, Lord Hugh Cecil, wrote that in Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution are to be found the main themes which underlie Conservative thought.

In the first place Burke insisted on the importance of religion and the value of its recognition by the State. Secondly, he hated and denounced with his whole heart injustice to individuals committed in the course of political or social reform. Thirdly, he attacked the revolutionary conception of equality, and maintained the reality and necessity of the distinctions of rank and station. Fourthly, he upheld private property as an institution sacred in itself and vital to the well being of society. Fifthly, he regarded human society rather as an organism than a mechanism, and an organism about which there is much that is mysterious. Sixthly, in close connection with this sense of the organic character of society, he urged the necessity of keeping continuity with the past and making changes gradually, and with as slight a dislocation as possible.³

Did Robert Cecil follow these Burkean tenets throughout his career and particularly with respect to the issue of parliamentary reform? Did Cecil remain irrevocably in the same position throughout the 1860's until the passage of the Reform Act of 1867 despite the changing political realities? This enquiry will attempt to answer these questions.

CHAPTER 1

THE AGE OF REFORM

I

G. Kitson Clark explains the impetus of the great nineteenth-century movement for change by stating that in the first quarter of the century:

It was becoming increasingly clear that what was politically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually a new society was growing up in England for which neither the institutions, nor the ideas, that had been inherited from the eighteenth century would suffice.¹

The final seventy-five years of the century, during which great alterations were made, are the years in which Robert Cecil lived. In this context his Conservative principles must be ascertained.

Parliamentary reform, the main focus of this enquiry, was indeed only one phase of this transformation and was often considered merely a means to an end by those who sought economic, social, or religious change. Thus the Reform Act of 1832 provided the framework and the setting for legislation that came in the twenty years that followed. The period 1850-1867 witnessed a "lull"² in reforming legislation and an attempt by several groups to introduce a new reform act which would permit further reforming legislation. It is significant, too, to point out that

"reform" is the correct term, for with few exceptions those who sought revision wished to remodel, to update, and to build on existing institutions rather than to overthrow them.

The legislation of the period 1832-1850 was as varied as it was massive. Two acts that followed 1832 almost immediately, the New Poor Law of 1834 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, attempted to modernize the methods of poor relief and local government. Another famous and significant parliamentary decision came in 1846 with the repeal of the Corn Laws. In other specific areas great progress was made. Ashley, who led the forces working for factory reform, pushed through important acts in 1833, 1842, 1844, 1847, and 1850 which reduced the working hours of women and children, forced children in factories to attend school, forbade the employment of women and children underground, demanded that machinery have safety guards, and provided for inspectors to enforce the law and report to a central authority. At the same time, the whole area of law enforcement was modernized. After the passing of Peel's famous Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 setting up London's Commission of Police at Scotland Yard, organized police work spread throughout the country and was finally coordinated after the report of the Royal Commission of 1839. Prison reform, a very complicated undertaking, made some progress especially in its

administrative aspects. Obsolete and unnecessary laws were gradually repealed and undue harshness was removed. After 1838, for example, no person was hanged except for murder or (up to 1861) attempted murder, and after 1841 the transportation of criminals to the colonies was almost completely abandoned. Education, which reflected the class structure of English society, began to change with the times. Where upper-class educational standards were improved, education of the middle classes was developed by the creation of new schools, the broadening of university education, and the widening of the curriculum to include scientific subjects. Attempts were made to educate the working classes. In religion, finally, disabilities on the dissenters and Roman Catholics were being removed, while the Oxford Movement and the Evangelical revival manifested the impetus to reform and modernize the Church.

While some of the legislation of this period benefited the working classes it was of a paternalistic nature. Working-class agitators, however, wished to realize ends that could not be gained through a middle-class electorate. Thus working men banded together hoping to achieve their divergent goals by parliamentary reform. This movement became known as Chartism. On three occasions between 1836 and 1848 petitions bearing up to three and one half million signatures were presented to Parliament in support of its program demanding annual Parliaments, universal suffrage,

equal electoral districts, payment of Members of Parliament, removal of the property qualification on members, and the ballot. For various reasons this movement completely collapsed after 1848.³

After the decline of Chartism there was an interlude in reform activity. In most areas it was incomplete and held in abeyance until the seventies. The removal of religious disabilities, for example, had to wait until 1871 before all posts at the great English universities were opened to dissenters. Likewise Church rates were not abandoned until 1868; Army commissions were sold until 1871; and the Civil Service was not made truly competitive by the Trevelyan-Northcote formula of 1853 until 1870. The hardships and tensions disappeared from society for this interval which lasted until the mid-sixties; "in fact, it might be said that to a dangerous night and a stormy morning had succeeded an afternoon which was sunlit and serene, even if it was only the interval before the hours of darkness came again."⁴

There were several factors that led to this mid-century phenomenon. Foremost was the disruptive party system that prevailed throughout the fifties. The schism in the Conservative party over protection left the Peelites in an independent position and they supported Liberal and Conservative policies intermittently. Party leaders, who rarely knew how much support they commanded, could not

shape any clear policy.⁵ Furthermore, the country was enjoying a period of prosperity shared by both industry and agriculture, and practical men saw no need for reform of a system that worked so well.⁶

Less tangible factors also played a part. For example, W.L. Burn suggest that although strong institutions continued to function they irritated few and therefore could not be made objects of agitation.

There was a very powerful aristocracy but it did not rest on a rigid theory of aristocracy; there was a Crown which flaunted no easily challengeable principle of monarchy; and a church which, on the whole, did not offend by arrogant claims to spiritual authority.⁷

Asa Briggs concurs and points out that "class" agitation, though prominent in the forties and the late sixties, was relatively absent in this interim period.⁸ Finally, parliamentary reform gained little mass support as there seemed to be no reason nor good precedent in democratic institutions.⁹ Where democracy had been tried, in America and France, great problems seemed to be developing. This "sunlit and serene afternoon" became a darker evening in 1866 when William Ewart Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Liberal government of Earl Russell, introduced a bill for parliamentary reform.

II

For centuries members of the House of Commons had represented either a county or a borough. Although both

types of constituencies returned at least one member, and usually two, they differed in all other respects. The county had in times past corresponded to the shire which was an ancient civil division. Boroughs, on the other hand, originated in towns which by act of Parliament, by prescription, by writ of summons, or by royal charter were represented in the national body. Then too, they were distinguished from each other by their area, size of electorate, and nature of franchise qualifications. By 1832 it was apparent that this ancient system needed adjustment in order that it might adequately represent a growing industrial society.

As the 1832 act was intended to be a reform measure of a moderate nature, some of the old franchise requirements were retained and county and borough qualifications continued to differ. In the county the ancient right of franchise of the 40s. freeholder was untouched save for certain minor limitations. In addition, the copyholder, the leaseholder, and those who paid an annual rent of £50 gained the franchise. The first two types of new voters gained their right because of the ownership of land. The £50 rental qualification, embodied in an amendment by the Marquis of Chandos and subsequently known as the Chandos amendment, enfranchised any tenant whose yearly rent paid to one landlord was not less than £50. In the boroughs, the main body of electors was to be made up of persons

newly qualified by being "male persons who for a year before registration had occupied as owners or tenants 'any house, warehouse, country house, shop, or other building, either separately or jointly with any land' of a clear yearly value of not less than £10."¹⁰ It was also specified that the land must be within the bounds of the borough, that the occupier must have been rated to all taxes for the relief of the poor, that he must have paid all rates and taxes due to him the preceding April, and that he must not have received parochial relief within the past year. Other persons qualified to vote in borough constituencies were ancient rights voters. Qualification by the latter method was, with the exception of the freeman, to cease when the present holder died.¹¹ In both county and borough, for the first time persons qualified to vote were required to register.

The general aim of the redistribution of seats was to transfer some representation from the heavily represented but now lightly populated south of England to the lightly represented but heavily populated and industrialized north. In the final form 56 boroughs classified as Schedule A were completely disfranchised while 30 boroughs (Schedule B) each lost one seat. The enfranchisement clauses (Schedules C and D) gave 22 northern metropolitan towns two seats and 21 other industrial areas one seat. Thus the industrial towns received a total of 65 seats. In order that the

agricultural interest not be undermined, 65 seats were assigned to the counties under Schedule F. These seats were dispensed with by splitting 26 English counties and giving each half two members, by assigning to other large counties one extra Member of Parliament, and by giving three Welsh counties each one more member. The right of Oxford and Cambridge Universities to elect representatives was neither altered nor challenged. Thus the goal of the 1832 act--to reduce the influence of large landowners--was attempted by increasing the electorate in many constituencies and by completely disfranchising other pocket boroughs in favor of giving representation to the new large towns.¹²

Probably the most significant point about the 1832 act was that it was, as the Tories charged, the first step in the democratization of the English parliamentary system.¹³ Irrevocable precedents were set and trends were begun that could not be reversed until their logical conclusions had been reached. The £50 rental qualification was, as Charles Seymour points out, "the starting point of an occupation qualification in counties, which marks as distinct a step in the development of the suffrage as the granting of household suffrage in boroughs a generation later."¹⁴ Furthermore, this act was a decided move toward the assimilation of the borough and county constituency since the total size of the boroughs was increased from about 500

square miles to approximately 2500 square miles.¹⁵ Finally, the redistribution of seats from the south of England seemed to be a move towards the radical demand for representation by population. Although Whig proponents of this act abhorred the principle of equal electoral districts, this trend continued until its acceptance in 1885.¹⁶

The act also had important effects on the structure of politics in subsequent years. While many seats were removed from aristocratic control, the pocket-borough did not become totally extinct. Redistribution did not go far enough to eliminate the possibility of a man's buying a seat. The general conclusion is that the 1832 act did not lead to any notable decrease in corruption.¹⁷ The working classes were not satisfied with the measure; indeed they had two grievances against it. Throughout the following years their representation decreased because of the stipulation that the ancient rights voting qualifications were to lapse after the death of the man who held it in 1832 and because of a relative increase in voters of other classes. Then too, the technicality that excluded the compound householder was a basis for much discontent.¹⁸ Finally, although Radicals such as Francis Place felt the act to be "a damnable delusion, giving us as many tyrants as shop keepers,"¹⁹ they were optimistic for the future. Place, for example, saw the "commencement of the breaking up of the old rotten system," and John Stuart Mill felt

that the act had broken the spell that had kept men bound to the fear of change.²⁰

During the quiet mid-Victorian period the subject of parliamentary reform was brought up in the Commons on several occasions. The schemes that were suggested came from two sources, party leaders who regarded the subject as a political maneuver,²¹ and Radical members who genuinely desired reform but were not numerically significant enough to have any chance of success. The first major political leader to use the issue was Lord John Russell (ironically known as "Finality Jack" because he had called the 1832 act the final settlement), who announced in 1849 that he favoured further changes in the electoral composition of England.²² Likewise the Conservatives let it be known that they would favour a broadening of the electoral base along "constitutional" lines.²³ Therefore government bills were introduced in 1852, 1854, 1859, and 1860. Two Radicals, Locke King and H. Berkeley, kept the issue before the House by annually introducing bills which called for specific measures of parliamentary reform. The former's annual motion was for reduction of the county rental qualification to make it the same as the borough qualification, while the latter member presented his motion in favour of the use of the ballot.

The first two of the government reform bills, in 1852 and 1854, were introduced by Lord John Russell: the first for his own government and the second for the

coalition administration of Lord Aberdeen in which he was Foreign Secretary. Both bills, however, were dropped before they were given second reading. The first bill met this fate because of the ministerial crisis of February of that year; the second, a complex bill embodying "fancy franchises"²⁴ was postponed, then abandoned, due to the pressures of the Crimean War. In 1859 the Derby-Disraeli ministry introduced the first Conservative reform bill which also contained "fancy franchises." Disraeli claimed that this measure attempted to adapt the spirit of 1832 to the England of 1859 saying that the "object of representation was to present a mirror of the mind of the country, its agriculture, its manufacturing and industry, its commerce, and its professional ability."²⁵ This bill, significant also for its use of a rating qualification, was defeated on a Russell Resolution which attempted to substitute "annual rental value" for "yearly rateable value."²⁶ The next administration, led by the Liberal Lord Palmerston, felt committed to some measure of reform that would be based on the rental value. Hence Lord John Russell again introduced a measure which employed extension of the suffrage to £6 in the boroughs and £10 in the counties. This bill simply was allowed to lapse after the second reading.

Although no other government measure was introduced in the lifetime of Lord Palmerston, a private member's bill introduced by the Radical, Edward Baines, is worthy of note.

It was during the debate on this measure that W.E. Gladstone, an heir-apparent to the leadership of the Liberal party, became known as a reformer. He appeared to favor manhood suffrage as he said that "I feel that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution."²⁷

The government bills of 1850-1860 came as the result of the attempts by party leaders to find some formula to enable them to govern successfully in a House in which their political strength was an unknown quantity.²⁸ However, in 1859 two events led to crystallization into two distinguishable political parties. The first came when Gladstone, the most important Peelite, joined the Liberal government and was followed en masse by other Peelites. The second was the meeting held in Willis' Rooms which welded the various Liberals together under the leadership of Lord Palmerston. Thereafter, it was possible for the party which controlled the majority in the Commons to rule without maneuvering in order to gain the votes of the politically unattached.²⁹

Throughout this period there seemed to be little reason to rush into a solution to the reform question, even though most agreed that an eventual settlement was inevitable. Probably the primary reason for this leisurely attitude was that throughout this period there was little popular agitation for reform. In introducing the 1852 measure, Lord John

Russell admitted that "it cannot with truth be said that very warm interest was manifest in the country on the subject, or that any great degree of curiosity prevailed as the nature of the ministerial scheme."³⁰ In 1860, the Annual Register reported that the government bill was introduced at a time of "great apathy."³¹ The next years were also relatively free of agitation and J.H. Park has found that in 1860 no petitions were presented for reform; in 1861, fourteen petitions were presented for reform; in 1862, two petitions were presented for reform; and in 1863, no petitions were presented for reform.³² One reason for this tranquility was economic security. In this period wages rose as railways gave new stimulus to manufacturing,³³ while agriculture enjoyed good harvests and general prosperity. Second, the leadership of Lord Palmerston meant that the Liberal party, which contained the ardent reformers, was led by a man who was a conservative in domestic affairs. As Francis Herrick points out, Palmerston "opposed any increase in the commercial and manufacturing interest and the Manchester School opposed any measure that would not increase the business influence."³⁴ At this time the interest of radical Liberals was focused on the American Civil War, the assassination of Lincoln, and Italian Unification. Meanwhile, in Parliament the Conservatives held things in abeyance between 1860 and 1865 as they were satisfied with Palmerstonian rule and did not wish to be forced into office

on parliamentary reform. That issue was simply too complex and they regarded it as certain political suicide because of their unfortunate fling with it in 1859. The Radicals also were patient on parliamentary reform and supported Palmerston as the great champion of democracy in Europe.³⁵ Thus the "conservative cause" was safe in the hands of Palmerston.

III

The elections of 1865 were decisive. Palmerston was old and his health was failing. Many defenders of the conservative cause, especially those in the Conservative party, felt that the logical successor to the aging leader and his policies was Lord Derby. They believed that there was great cause for concern as the Liberal successors to Palmerston appeared to be limited to the old reformer, John Russell, and the former Peelite, Gladstone, who was equally suspect because of his apparent conversion to manhood suffrage and his subsequent popularity with the radicals. This real issue was obscured by the old cry, "leave it to Pam," and the Liberals were returned with a majority of approximately seventy seats.³⁶ As predicted, Palmerston died before the new Assembly sat and Earl Russell became head of the government, with Gladstone serving as the leader in the House of Commons.

It came then as no surprise when the Queen's speech announced that reform would be dealt with and when Gladstone

rose in the Commons on March 12, 1866, to give first reading to a "Representation of the People Bill." Gladstone expressed the belief that he and many of his followers were committed to reform. This, indeed, was echoed by a majority of the Liberals who were to speak in favor of the bill. In addition, other factors strengthened the likelihood that a reform bill could be passed. The Liberal party seemed to remain a unified political entity.³⁷ Also Radical hopes were raised by the inclusion in the Russell government of their sympathizers, G.J. Goschen and W.E. Forster.³⁸ In addition, it was felt that reformers were morally aided by the Unionist victory in the American Civil War.³⁹ But yet on March 12, Conservatives were correct in believing that reform was not really desired by any section of the country.⁴⁰

The country, however, was to play a significant role in the eventual acceptance of a reform measure. The general prosperity of the early sixties waned, beginning in 1864. That year there was a commercial crisis in which the price of stocks dropped.⁴¹ This general decline in commerce reached a low point on May 10, 1866, "Black Friday," when several banks failed.⁴² Each year, 1865, 1866, and 1867, unemployment reached new highs,⁴³ with the working classes hardest hit by the declining wages accompanied by an increase in prices.⁴⁴ Agriculture was affected by a great cattle plague, which began in 1865,⁴⁵ and by poor harvests in 1866 and 1867. Working class orators began to turn their attention

to representation in Parliament as a means of solving their problems.

The Chairman at the meeting of dock laborers, a meeting called to consider the hard times, . . . stated distinctly that nothing could be done until . . . the working men were represented in Parliament.⁴⁶

In 1865 a Reform League was formed with its leaders including Cobden, Bright, Forster, Beales and most of the important Radicals. The League was aided by the more middle-class Reform Union. Throughout 1866 and 1867 public demonstrations organized by this group had an increasing and decided effect on Parliament and legislation.

The central feature of the original Liberal bill of 1866 was that it dealt exclusively with the extension of the franchise and planned to deal with redistribution of seats at a later date. In the boroughs the voting qualification was to be reduced from £10 to £7, a lodger qualification introduced, and the registration system altered. Rate-paying clauses were omitted, which would have enfranchised compound ratepayers and persons who paid their rates late. The total projected increase in the boroughs was two hundred thousand. In counties it was proposed that the £50 rental qualification be lowered to £14.⁴⁷ Rights of copyholders and leaseholders were made equal to those of freeholders, and henceforth they were to vote in a county if they were not registered in a borough. In addition, a vote was given to any man who had £50 in a savings bank. The lodger and the savings bank qualifications were to operate in both the

county and the borough. Gladstone estimated that approximately four hundred thousand new voters would join just over one million, for a total constituency of almost one and one half million.⁴⁸

Three days after the bill was introduced it met its first great obstacle. Earl Grosvenor, a dissident Whig, moved an amendment which was seconded by Lord Stanley, a Conservative, to force the Liberal bill to include the redistribution of seats. After rather lengthy debate this resolution was narrowly defeated by 318 votes to 313. Thirty Liberals, labelled "Adullamites" by John Bright, voted against the government. Forced to retreat a step, the Government introduced a bill on May 8, which provided for redistribution.⁴⁹ Then on June 18, Lord Dunkellin, another dissident Whig, proposed an amendment to substitute "rateable value" for "rental value" in the boroughs.⁵⁰ This amendment carried, 315 to 304, and the Government, foreseeing insurmountable difficulties, elected to resign after a short ministerial crisis. Lord Derby was called upon to form a new administration and for the remainder of the 1866 session reform was not discussed.

Following the defeat of the Liberal reform bill the Reform League turned to organizing greater demonstrations. After important meetings at Trafalger Square and Birmingham in early July, a meeting was planned for Hyde Park on July 22. Spencer Walpole, the new Home Secretary, ordered the

gates closed and placed 1600-1800 policemen in the Park. The huge crowd knocked over the railings and became involved in several scuffles. After this episode the magnitude of the demonstrations increased. By late fall it was reported that demonstrations in Manchester included 100,000-200,000 people, in Leeds 200,000, and in London police counted 23,000 working men from trades unions and societies in one giant parade. This agitation went on into the spring of 1867.⁵¹

The effect of such a mass movement was widespread and pronounced. It would now be ridiculous for a Member of Parliament who opposed reform to suggest that the working classes cared little for it.⁵² Furthermore, the demonstrations made it impossible for the Conservatives to avoid the question.⁵³ In February when it appeared that the Tories intended to put through a very moderate measure the intensity of agitation was increased.⁵⁴ Finally, the agitation seems to have changed the opinions of leading opponents of reform. The Tory press, even the Ultra-Tory Blackwood's, ceased opposition to reform and not only asked how far the measure was to go but eventually even advocated household suffrage.⁵⁵ Leading Tories began to fear the wrath of the working classes. In July of 1866, Sir Stafford Northcote wrote:

We are expecting to have all our heads broken tonight, as the mob are now trying it on in Hyde Park, and perhaps if they are defeated there they will come on

here. . . . The past week has been one of terrible anxiety. . . . It did at one time seem probable that we should have to resort to very strong measures today, and that there would have been a serious collision and bloodshed; for that we should have been prepared if it had been necessary. But it was not for us to provoke the collision by menaces, when there was a possibility of averting it by conciliatory language; and as we have (or seem to have) carried our point by conciliation without concession, I think we may be well satisfied. However, I am still uncertain whether we are quite out of the wood.⁵⁶

It seems likely that Northcote would have been in favor of concession in 1867 as with the increasing intensity of the demonstrations it became obvious that they were far from being "out of the wood."⁵⁷

Before the 1867 session met the Conservatives decided on the course of action they would pursue. On November 25, 1866 the Queen recorded her conversation with Mr. Disraeli:

He said only two Cabinets had been held upon it, that the members were unanimous in agreeing that the subject must be dealt with by Resolutions, preparatory to a Commission being issued, so that the matter might be settled irrespective of Party.⁵⁸

Thus the Government began by introducing a series of Resolutions. However, this method did not satisfy the Opposition, who demanded that a bill be produced. The Cabinet then considered two bills for introduction to the House. The bolder, which proposed to place the borough franchise on the basis of a rating household suffrage but reduce its effects by substantial checks and a double vote for the upper classes, was accepted by the Cabinet on Saturday, February 23, for presentation to the House the

following Monday. Over the weekend, the Lords Cranborne and Carnarvon, after examination of the statistics, found they could not accept this bill as the effect of the working class voters would be much greater in small constituencies. This, they claimed, had not been taken into account in the framing of the bill. On Monday the Cabinet, in order to prevent resignations at such a crucial time, agreed to present a more moderate bill which provided a £6 rating franchise for the boroughs and a £20 rating franchise for the counties. Sir John Pakington, the First Lord of the Admiralty, unhappy with the sudden reversal forced on the Cabinet, sarcastically referred to this bill as the "Ten Minutes Bill." Opposition members liked this bill even less and ridiculed it mercilessly. The following Thursday a Conservative revolt culminated with a gathering at the Carlton Club and backbenchers urged the Cabinet to revert to its earlier measure. This was done on Saturday March 2. Immediately, Cranborne and Carnarvon resigned along with General Jonathan Peel.

Disraeli introduced this more sweeping measure on March 18. It had the popular appeal of "household suffrage" as the basis of the borough qualification. The full effects of such a step were modified by stipulations that any man must have occupied his house for two years, have been rated to the relief of the poor, and have paid his rates. A second vote would go to any man who paid 20s. annually in

direct taxes.⁵⁹ Like the 1859 bill, "fancy franchises" (a university degree, membership in a profession, a £50 savings bank deposit) were included as a counterpoise to the effect of numbers. The county franchise was reduced to a £15 rating. Redistribution of seats was to be modest and, like the Liberal plan of the previous year, there was to be no absolute disfranchisement of any boroughs. These provisions would have enfranchised approximately four hundred thousand electors and would have enormously strengthened the political influence of the upper classes.⁶⁰ Many of the Liberals were willing to go along with this bill and hoped to mould it to their specifications, despite the violent attack of Gladstone who felt that the bill was both too wide and too full of checks. Liberals, however, saw promise in the conciliatory attitude of Disraeli, who asked them to assist him in carrying the bill and promised to consider any suggestions. Thus the second reading passed without a division, despite Gladstone's attempts to substitute a £5 annual rental value for rating household suffrage.⁶¹

In Committee, Disraeli's promise to consider any changes in the bill that might be proposed was taken to full advantage and the measure was radically changed by ministerial defeats on amendments and by voluntary concessions. The first amendment, proposed by the Radical Ayrton and carried, reduced the residential qualification from two

years to one year. The second, again proposed by a Radical, Torrens, extended the borough franchise to lodgers who had occupied their rooms for twelve months.⁶² Then the important Hodgkinson amendment abolished the acts under which the compounding of rates was permitted and made the occupier alone responsible. Charles Seymour concludes that "nearly half a million occupiers were qualified who would otherwise have failed to receive the suffrage."⁶³ The "fancy franchises" had been bitterly opposed particularly by Gladstone, who called those for whom it was intended "those favored children of fortune, those select human beings, made of finer clay than the rest of their fellow subjects."⁶⁴ With the effective admittance of the additional thousands of compound ratepayers this troublesome portion of the bill became superfluous and was abandoned. "Fancy franchises" would not begin to act as counterpoise to so many new voters. Finally, the county franchise was further reduced to £12 rating and a more radical plan for redistribution of seats was adopted giving boroughs more representation. On July 15, this bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons. After brief discussion, the Lords passed the measure and 938,000⁶⁵ men were added to the electorate in England and Wales. Similar bills followed for Scotland and Ireland. A second act for parliamentary reform was on the statute books.

CHAPTER 2

AGAINST THE CURRENT

Although "advanced" thinkers saw the age of reform as one of positive progress, others held a more sceptical view of the transformation that was occurring. Lord Robert Cecil was one Victorian who felt that change should be made only with utmost care in order that the country's historic traditions not be destroyed. As the Member of Parliament for Stamford from 1853 to 1868 he opposed reform measures such as the abolition of church rates, the end of religion tests at Oxford and Cambridge, and the use of competitive examinations in the Civil Service which he felt would tend respectively to destroy the Church of England, the great English universities, and the structure of society. As he saw it the great protector of English institutions was the Constitution and his greatest efforts were directed against attempts to broaden its electoral base.

It must not be thought, however, that Cecil was an inflexible reactionary who wished to uphold aristocratic privilege and resist all reform. In 1859 he called for changes to correct an outmoded institution:

The English law is burdened with anomalies, and clogged with a rusty and obsolete machinery to an extent paralleled by no nation on earth. There is many a

municipal and parochial institution that has outlived its age and calls for a vigorous though careful reform. ¹

Another practical reform that he thought necessary was the substitution of voting papers for personal voting at elections to eliminate much of election corruption and to end the "antiquated method of bringing voters to the poll instead of the poll to the voters."² Lord Robert also opposed legislation that worked to the benefit of only one class. In objecting to a proposal to erect a museum from public funds that would have been out of the reach of the poor, he stated:

If these collections are to be merely the luxurious resort of the rich, of those who from their wealth and position are able, if they please, to set up galleries and create collections for themselves, we give to the people no adequate return for the taxation which was imposed upon them. I know that such a doctrine is not popular in this House.³

Thus he was not one who sought to strengthen aristocratic privilege nor maintain "old ways," but rather a conservative who wished to correct abuses and anomalies in a careful way.

Lord Robert's views on parliamentary reform were based on his conception of the English constitution. Like many of his contemporaries, he saw that the great merit of the Constitution was its balance between classes and interests. In 1859 he stated that "the great object of all constitutional restriction is to prevent any majority tyrannizing over a minority--any class dominating over another. No matter what the class,

such is the selfishness of mankind, tyranny is almost sure to result."⁴ Moreover, Cecil felt that the situation in 1832 was not at all analogous to that of the 1860's.

Unlike reformers who attempted to argue that the same conditions existed in mid-century as had demanded reform in 1832, he pointed out that the great evil of the unreformed House of Commons had been that certain propertied classes had no representation at all and thus the constitution lacked balance. The Reform Act of 1832 had created a practical balance with which they should not tamper.

[Reformers] professed to extract it [a need for reform] from the precedent of 1832. . . . The analogy was, in truth, quite imaginary. The two periods of 1860 and 1832 had nothing similar either in the alleged abuses that were assailed or in the character of the assailants. Before 1832 certain classes and parties in the country enjoyed a preponderating share of power; and the contest of which that year saw the close was a struggle on the part of the excluded portion to wrest a larger share of influence from the other. The contest [the Liberal bill of 1860] with which we have recently been menaced could not have been waged by any portion of the property-classes, for they all stand now upon an equal footing.⁵

Cecil's belief that the Constitution possessed perfect balance despite the fact that the working classes had relatively little representation was grounded in what he considered to be the purposes and aims of government. Borrowing from the statements of Gladstone and other reformers who had argued that the laws of nature supported the cause of franchise extension, he replied that "the laws of nature, whatever they may be, do not contain any

allusion to representative assemblies."⁶ Furthermore, said Lord Robert,

Writers upon them usually lay down that mankind have a natural and inalienable right to their freedom--that is to say, to doing what they like with their own muscles and their own bodies, so long as they do not therein interfere with the similar right possessed by their neighbours. Then they lay down another right, subject to a similar limitation, that everyone has a right to do what he likes with his own property, so long as he does not interfere with his neighbours' rights.⁷

Cecil concluded, then, that the "State exists, or is theoretically supposed to exist, in order that these two rights may be adequately protected, and also that their exercise may be rigorously kept within the boundaries of these two limitations."⁸ Thus "every political right which a man can be said to possess by natural law. . . must arise from one of these two fundamental rights."⁹ He conceded that as far as government was concerned with individual freedom each person had an equal claim.¹⁰

It was impossible, however, to give all men an equal share in the governing process because property, the other natural right, was not equally distributed. Furthermore Lord Robert asserted that "the chief object of Government, in England at least, is the protection of property" and went on to point out that most of the questions that come before Parliament--rates, tithes, lands, finance, even foreign policy--concern this second "natural right."¹¹ The fallacy of an extension of the suffrage is thus considered:

Here lies the fundamental fallacy of those who press for a wide extension of the franchise. They tell us that every man has a right to a share in the government of the community to which he belongs. But they persist in forgetting that 'the suffrage' means something very much more than a share. It means an equal share. To give 'the suffrage' to a poor man is to give him as large a part in determining that legislation which is mainly concerned with property as the banker whose name is known on every Exchange in Europe, and the merchant whose ships are in every sea, as the land-owner who owns the soil of a whole manufacturing town. An extension of the suffrage to the working classes means that upon a question of taxation, or expenditure, or upon a measure vitally affecting commerce, two day-labourers shall outvote Baron Rothschild.¹²

Lord Robert proceeded further in this discussion of natural law and government, adopting an analogy with the joint-stock company. Stating that joint-stock companies, which, like governments, make use of representatives, do not allow each person an equal share in determining policy, he suggested that the state likewise give each person a share in governing the country proportional to his stake in the country.¹³ If the joint-stock company were to give each person an equal vote, as reformers advocated for government, disaster would follow.

The shareholders of one share, especially if they happened to be comparatively very numerous, would soon discover that it was their interest to act together. They would find out that it was possible to manage the concern entirely to their own profit, without burdening in any degree that modest portion of the capital which was represented by their own shares. If they were cold and strictly logical in the pursuit of their own interests, they would at once resolve that all calls should be made upon the shares of the larger holders, and that all the profits should be divided amongst themselves.¹⁴

The future Prime Minister admitted that the state was much more than a joint-stock company because of the emotions

attached to it. It was the reformers, he noted, who said that such sentimental attachments "are the heritage of darker times; that it is a delusion to give a personality to the state; to attribute to it moral duties, or to employ its powers for the gratification of lofty aims and feelings."¹⁵ Thus Cecil effectively displayed that "natural rights" could easily be shown to refute the cause of franchise extension.

Lord Robert saw no practical necessity for parliamentary reform. Admitting that the theorist would find little "worthy of imitation" in the present system as it had anomalies at every degree,¹⁶ he maintained that since it reflected the English social system and since "the English spirit and habits of thought . . . control its deliberations," it was satisfactory.¹⁷

Cecil continued by citing several favourable attributes of the Constitution. He maintained that "one of the first peculiarities of the House of Commons that attracts attention, and one that has proved a stumbling-block to almost every other representative assembly, is the absolute freedom of speech in respect to quantity."¹⁸ Notable among nations who had failed in this respect were France and the United States. In addition, he found that the nation and the Government were brought into close connection by the absolute power the House of Commons had over the Executive. Thus "any policy which is approved by

the mass of the nation is certain to be promptly adopted by its rulers."¹⁹

Other countries have tried to produce the same result by providing that the ruler shall be periodically elected by the people. This contrivance fails in two ways. It makes no provision for changes of opinion which may take place between the intervals of election; and it takes no note of any public opinion except such as can make itself heard over the din of artificial cries which it is the professional duty of an organized body of electioneers to raise.²⁰

The Constitution worked as well as it did, according to Lord Robert, because it was the result of centuries of conflict and was based on practical achievements rather than on theoretical philosophizing.²¹ He regarded any attempt to make such theoretical changes, as he phrased it, as early as April, 1860, as "a leap absolutely in the dark."²² Thus it was his conclusion that the Constitution did not need to be defended before a jury of philosophy and that its only defense was its practical success.

Until mid-1866 Cecil was critical of any schemes for parliamentary reform because no class wanted it. The propertied classes, he maintained, certainly were not calling for it as they were already fairly represented. Likewise the working classes did not wish for change as their "leaders" were suggesting. After the failure of the 1860 bill he said that "no class of importance called for reform, and there was no sort of indication that the desire for it which agitators imputed to the working men was genuinely felt."²³ Yet, strangely, schemes for parliamentary reform continued

to crop up.²⁴

Cecil also ridiculed the claims of John Bright and Lord John Russell that the failure to bring in an adequate measure could mean revolution or civil war. His total rejection of any notion that events in England could parallel those of France in 1848 was based on what he saw as three essential differences with the French situation. First, since the middle classes had power in Britain, the working classes would not have their leadership and allegiance, as had been the case in France. The working classes, he believed, could not start a revolution alone. Second, unlike her continental neighbour, Britain did not concentrate all the reins of power in one knot. Thus the people of one center such as Paris would not be able to dictate their wishes to the entire country. Third, and most significantly thought Robert, there was no great suffering in England as there had been in France.²⁵ The question of revolution was, then, entirely out of the question and merely the idle threat of would-be reformers.

Lord Robert saw the reform bills of the eighteenth-fifties and early sixties not as great evils for their own immediate consequences but rather as steps toward democracy. Each step would make democracy more inevitable.

The most formidable kind of proposal with which the defenders of the Constitution have had to deal is that which goes straight in the direction of democracy, but dare not advance very far upon the road. Such are the schemes which have been offered by Lord Russell, and

which if democracy really be his object, do credit to his astuteness. The change it introduces, though large, falls enormously short of manhood suffrage. The electoral body which it would create would still probably be considerably less than half of the adult male population. The apparent moderation enables its advocates to profess a respect for the Constitution, and even--if it is convenient to do so--to declare that they dislike democracy; and it gives a pretext to men who, for party's sake wish not to take alarm, to put their alarms aside. But the change that it does make is purely and entirely in the direction of democracy. When it is made, the democratic force is so much stronger, the Conservative force so much the weaker. The Radical army starts upon its next campaign with a better base and a larger force; and in proportion as it has gained its adversaries have lost.²⁶

Furthermore, he pointed out that as the politicians became increasingly certain with each new reform measure that democracy was inevitable, they would be increasingly unwilling to oppose further franchise extensions for fear that the new voters would never forgive the man who sought to exclude them from a share in the governing processes.²⁷ Thus Lord Robert viewed even moderate schemes for franchise extension as steps to democracy. The only way to alter this trend, which none but a minority of Radicals sincerely desired, was to resist all tendencies to democracy before momentum was gained.

Lord Robert's adverse views on democracy as a form of government were based on what he considered to be the poor examples that he saw in his contemporary world. In France the attempt to establish a "democratic" republic in 1848 had led to Napoleonic caesarism which Englishmen of all persuasion feared. But the country from which Cecil

drew most of his conclusions regarding democracy was the United States. He saw the Americans as "conductors of a great experiment" which had worked well for a time.

The government was cheap and free from debt, the taxes were light, emigrants poured in from Europe, and the increase and prosperity of the new country under its new form of government were beyond anything that the history of the world could parallel.²⁸

The effect of the first successes of this experiment on Europe was great as the French attempted to copy this system. In England a school of Liberals developed that called upon their countrymen to follow the American example. The leading proponent of this idea in the middle nineteenth century was John Bright.

While the American system worked well under tranquil, expanding conditions, now that it was receiving a serious challenge in the form of Civil War, the inherent defects of democracy were being brought out.²⁹ To Cecil the criterion of the success of a government was not how well it worked under perfect conditions which any system could thrive on, but rather how well it met the emergencies with which it was confronted.³⁰ In spite of the failure of this democratic example, he noted that its supporters were still inviting Englishmen "to study the beauties of democracy as they are exhibited in America, and to imitate them as far as we can."³¹ England's future leader wondered "how has she [England] received the lesson which has been given to her in the history of her headstrong offspring?"³² In July

of 1861 he wrote that he believed that "this lesson has not been lost" to the majority of the nation and cited as evidence the present session in which not only reform had been rejected but Church rates also had been retained.³³

Lord Robert's theoretical objection to democracy was that it would be domination by one class. He thought that such domination or any step toward it was irrevocable. Agreeing with those who suggested that the working classes were not a homogeneous group he pointed out, however, that where material gain was concerned their interests were identical and as soon as they saw that it was to their advantage to work together temptation would overwhelm them. Cecil felt that domination of the working classes would be similar to any other class domination and stated "as despots are liable to individual temptation, and aristocracies sometimes give way to class selfishness, so the pressure of want or the intoxication of passion will overpower the conscience of a democracy."³⁴ As was earlier discussed, he was of the opinion that the present English method of balancing classes and interests worked well and that written constitutional checks as the Americans had originally employed could not control the domination of the majority.³⁵ He said that in America it had been shown that "once the balance between the democracy and the other powers in the State is upset, it will never rest until it has swept them utterly away, and reigns not only supreme, but alone."³⁶

"That happened," he warned, "which if we lowered our suffrage, would happen among ourselves."³⁷

Cecil feared, judging from the American experience, that democracy would mean the end of freedom. Noting that the advanced Liberals such as John Bright looked to the United States for lessons on freedom, he stated that "we used to think freedom meant being free; but that definition is evidently very wide of the mark" as "the great champion of freedom, the Government of Washington, is pouring out blood and treasure with fabulous prodigality in order to prevent a community of some five millions of men from being free."³⁸ To Lord Robert the Confederate states had as much right to be free as the Poles had. He suggested that since the Liberals regarded Czar Nicholas as the enemy of freedom they should similarly regard President Lincoln as the enemy of freedom. Both heads of state had equal antipathy to the break up of their countries.³⁹

Within a democracy Cecil felt that there was little freedom and no emancipation from the evils the radicals saw in the old aristocratic English system.

Their political ideal more nearly resembles one which is usually spoken of as antiquated, but which is antiquated only in the particular form that it assumed. They believe in a divine right; they uphold a legitimacy; they teach an unquestioning obedience; they look upon force as a legitimate weapon for the propagation of the faith. But their divine right is the right of the multitude; their legitimacy enthrones the majority; the unquestioning obedience which they require is to the decree of the ballot-box; the faith which they do not shrink from propagating by force is the sentimental

pseudo-religion which, in this nineteenth century, has so widely usurped the place of faith.⁴⁰

Continuing his observations he pointed to the repression of the people of the American South as evidence of what Liberals considered to be freedom--the unchecked power of the majority.⁴¹ Meanwhile in the North, Cecil noted, oppression was not condemned, but spoken of as an expression of the "people's will." He suggested that freedom to Liberals was such: "If one man imprisons you, that is tyranny; if two men, or a number of men imprison you, that is freedom."⁴² Cecil charged that America had been unable to maintain liberty in its first serious challenge and "has become a land of passports, of conscriptions, of press-censorship and port-office espionage, of bastilles and lettres de cachet."⁴³

Lord Robert found that in a democracy there was a definite unwillingness to state unpopular opinions because of a tyrannizing majority and thus free-speech was effectively curtailed. In evidence of this repression, he cited de Tocqueville.

The enormous risk of uttering unpopular opinions, and the difficulty of finding men who even venture to entertain them in the recesses of their own brains, is a feature of American society which has been noticed by almost every traveller Upon any great question of public interest, speech and thought are less free in the United States than they are in Paris or in Rome. Cases have been constantly recorded, both in the newspapers and in books of travels, where the expression of some unwelcome doctrine, even in private, has been visited with fierce retribution under the elastic penal code of Judge Lynch. . . . M. de

Tocqueville, whose bias if anything was in favour of democracy, and whose writings have always been signalised for judicial impartiality, speaks as strongly upon this subject as the bitterest caricaturist could have spoken.⁴⁴

Lord Robert felt that a democratic government would be bad government. To him it was inconceivable that rule of the majority would result in anything but rule of passion because of ignorance and sheer numbers.

But with a democracy the case is very different. With them passion is not the exception, but the rule. Whether they are swayed by the passion of greed or the passion of enthusiasm, by the nobler emotions or the baser, patient and far-seeing calculation goes for very little in their councils. In the collective deliberations of any body of men, reason gains the mastery over passion exactly in proportion as they are educated and as they are few. Passion is fostered equally by the two main characteristics of the democratic sovereign--ignorance and numbers But an emotion will shoot electrically through a crowd which might have appealed to each man by himself in vain They [the crowd] will always act either to favour some doctrine in which they fanatically believe, or to serve the most obvious interest of the moment.⁴⁵

Cecil claimed that the "passion" of this majority had effectively ended rule of law as the will of the majority dispensed with restraints and laws which did not suit it at a particular moment.⁴⁶

Believing that the protection and regulation of property was the chief role of the English government, Cecil greatly feared the fate of this function under a democratically elected government. It was his fear that temptation would overcome the class overwhelmingly in control and it would plunder the wealthier classes through taxation. He pointed out that, while there may be many

differences in the lower classes, on the question of taxation they all wished to shift it to their betters.⁴⁷

Thus the situation would be one in which "the rich shall pay all the taxes, and the poor shall make all the laws."⁴⁸

He argued that in America the slaves owned by the Confederacy were considered to be the sacred property of their owners similar to the landed property owned by the great English landowners.⁴⁹ Democracy, then, would be a serious challenge to the property of Englishmen.

The man who was later to be a distinguished Foreign Secretary in a much democratized Britain also regarded democracy as a serious threat to the conduct of foreign policy. Not only did he think that foreign policy would become dependent upon the slow action of public opinion and thus lose its effectiveness,⁵⁰ but he also suspected that such an important area of governmental action would also be subjected to the passions of the majority. Wishing to keep taxes low and seeing little need of a large army,⁵¹ the majority would force cuts in the defence estimates. This would result, in turn, in a weakened foreign policy since the government would not be able to back up allies nor meet challenges in a meaningful and forceful way. Cecil feared, in addition, that as the House of Commons became more and more representative it would become increasingly concerned with peace before honour and "perfidious Albion" would become increasingly a greater reality.⁵²

The American experiment also taught England the effect democracy had on a country's leadership. Writing in 1862 when the Confederacy was everywhere defeating the Union forces, he noted that although the Unionists had every advantage in their favour their effort was characterized by gross incompetence and failure at every level. This, said Lord Robert, was the fault of their generals and statesmen, and this lack of leadership was due to a fallacy in their democratic institution which led to a "poverty of greatness."⁵³ The South, however, had good leadership. Lord Robert conceded that the South professed to be a democracy but suggested that the full effects of democracy were not being felt because in excluding the slaves from the franchise a majority was excluded. Furthermore, the sympathy of the "mean whites" was with the landowners to whom they naturally deferred. Thus with planter control the first-rate men were pushed forward and the effects of democracy were forced down by a practical aristocracy.⁵⁴

Any country, said Cecil, needs to make use of its "natural leaders." These leaders are characterized by "wealth, in some countries birth, in all intellectual power and culture."⁵⁵ They are qualified to lead because "they have the leisure for the task," they can "do it for the most part gratuitously," they come from a "class among whom a failure in honour is mercilessly dealt with," and

they have been brought up under a high moral code. Thus "they are the aristocracy of a country in the original and best sense of the word."⁵⁶ However, in a democracy these best people do not rise to the top. Cecil said that it is because these people, rightly or wrongly, "do not like going round, hat in hand, begging for the votes of the mob." The "mob" likewise does not support these men because they give their support to those who offer the most "claptrap" pledges. Politics, therefore, loses its position as a profession for honourable men and "becomes the refuge of educated men who have lost their character, and of ready-tongued adventurers."⁵⁷ Soon politics becomes merely a means of livelihood and those in it are forced to be pawns of the majority to insure success.⁵⁸ Cecil thought that politics may have already begun to lose its place as he suggested that there was "an enormous difficulty in finding good candidates for the larger constituencies" (where democratic forces were strongest) and that there was a feeling that politicians were lesser men.⁵⁹

Cecil used the American example to explode what he considered to be other common fallacies about democracy. First, while agreeing that the world had seen progress, he rejected the notion that the movement to progress had been connected to the democratic movement. He did not believe that progress was seen when a community of twenty millions subjugated one of five millions, nor when private property

was devastated in war, nor when outrages were committed against women and children.⁶⁰ Then, second, he pointed out that Bright and Cobden had been forced to modify their old claims "that democracy was a cure for war, for revolution, for extravagance, for corruption, for nepotism, for class legislation, and in short, for all the evils with which the states of Europe are familiar."⁶¹ Now, however, he noted that they modestly claimed that this American war was no worse than some European experiences.⁶² Cecil also chastized Cobden and Bright for not counselling peace to the Americans when they had had a chance as they had done in England during the Crimean War.⁶³

Feeling that there was neither need for reform by extending the suffrage nor cause to believe that democracy would result in anything short of disaster, Lord Robert alleged that attempts at parliamentary reform were the result of the political entanglements in which the party leaders had placed themselves.⁶⁴ It was his contention that each political party was charged with two tasks: first, "it has to maintain a certain set of principles;" and second, "it has to obtain office for a number of its principal followers." The former function was its highest; the latter was an appeal to man's weakness. Since these two functions were often at odds and the second and baser became more important, principles were sacrificed for the sake of office.⁶⁵ Cecil opposed the 1859 Conservative Reform

bill as it attempted to bargain with the Radicals for support of the Conservative government.⁶⁶ The ultimate result, he thought, would be to drive the Liberals completely to the Radical position to obtain their support.⁶⁷ In July, 1860, he wrote that in the past session the Conservatives had maintained their principles (defeated a Reform bill, retained paper-duties and church rates) while in opposition.⁶⁸ It was, therefore, sensible to stay in opposition to do true service to their institutions and to check the Radicals until they had sufficient majority to maintain their principles in government.⁶⁹

The main factor inhibiting the parties from adherence to their principles was, according to Cecil, the lack of principle in party leaders. It was his opinion that a party leader must be true to the principles of his party and use his influence for these principles or he was guilty of a breach of trust to his followers and those who elected him.⁷⁰ While somewhat critical of Liberal leaders and particularly of Lord John Russell,⁷¹ he was most critical of the leader in the House of Commons of his own party, Benjamin Disraeli. In 1859 he began to write against his leader by stating in Bentley's Quarterly:

The battle is all too unequal between democrats on the one side who care only for principle, and Constitutiona-
lists on the other who care only for place. 'Give us concessions', say the Radicals, 'and you may keep your places as long as you like.' 'Give us our places,' say Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Russell with a single breath, 'and we will squeeze what concessions we can out of our reluctant followers.'⁷²

The Member for Stamford was also critical of his leader's wish to crush the Whigs by attempting to combine with Radicals on the 1859 Reform bill as such tactics did little to advance Conservatism.⁷³ In an 1859 letter to his father, the second Marquis, he again revealed his opposition to Disraeli's leadership:

When Lord Exeter proposed to me first to stand for Stamford, I told him that I had no trust whatever in Mr. D'Israeli. . . . I certainly never have said or done anything to express a trust in Mr. D'Israeli individually.⁷⁴

Again, in 1860 in two separate articles in the Quarterly Review, Cecil attacked Disraeli's hunger for office and his want of principle.⁷⁵ By next spring, however, he had modified his opinions of his leader and believed Disraeli was supporting principle in opposition. On one occasion that spring he wrote to his father claiming that he had "ceased to blame Mr. Disraeli because he has ceased to deserve it."⁷⁶ Then during the Easter recess he wrote to his colleague, Lord Carnarvon:

We have had a prosperous but very stupid Session hitherto. Dizzy, converted from evil ways, has since behaved like an angel--so that I am beginning to incline to the belief that he really has been baptized. My idea of angelic behaviour consists of supporting Palmerston and opposing Bright on all possible occasions--at all events the latter. Yet I am afraid the Government is getting weaker--and I doubt if there are the materials for a Conservative Government independent of Liberal support. If a government is to depend on Liberal support I think it is much better for the reputation of public men that it should be one calling itself Conservative--though the names are great trash.⁷⁷

Lord Robert felt that even though by 1865 the reform issue was being routed it could not be expected that it would be "permanently laid to rest." He felt that this issue would be raised by every candidate who looked for the support of the poorest classes that had the vote. It was his opinion, however, that the Constitution would not fall because of the onslaughts of those outside the franchise but rather because of the apathy of those who held voting power. Robert Cecil warned that only with the vigilance of the party and its leaders would the Constitution survive.⁷⁸

CHAPTER 3

VICTORY, THEN SURRENDER

The 1865 election battle saw Robert Cecil, by then Viscount Cranborne,¹ concerned chiefly with the plight of the Constitution. His views on this election are contained in a July article in the Quarterly Review. Like other Conservatives he maintained that Lord Palmerston was too old to continue for long and that a vote for "Pam's" Liberal party was actually a vote for either William Ewart Gladstone or Earl Russell. He pointed out that while the country and the aging Prime Minister were conservatively minded, both Gladstone and Russell had previously advocated some form of franchise reduction.² Cranborne also feared that if the former Liberal became the country's leader, a reform bill would be accompanied by attacks on the Irish Church, on the agricultural interest, and perhaps on the Church of England itself.³ He felt that the historical problem of the Liberal party, the heterogeneous alliance between Radicals and aristocratic Whigs, would again come to the fore, forcing Whigs to sacrifice their principles for the sake of place and to bow to the Radical demands.⁴

In this same article, as nearly an election manifesto

as Cranborne ever wrote, he appealed to the electorate to entrust the Constitution and hence traditional British freedom into the safe hands of the Conservative Party. His party alone was qualified to defend the Consitution as its members and leaders were opposed to all bare degradation of the suffrage, and to all alterations that could by any degree increase the democratic element. In addition, he also noted that the Conservatives, unlike the Liberals, defended Church establishment.⁵ In closing, he warned that the real election issue was not to "leave it to Pam" but whether England was to be governed by property and intelligence or by numbers, and that this was the great issue upon which the hopes of freedom, order, and civilization depended.⁶

By January of 1866 the Liberals had been elected, Palmerston had died, and Earl Russell had become Prime Minister with Gladstone serving as leader in the House of Commons. Cranborne in "The Coming Session" in the Quarterly Review was again concerned with the prospects of the Constitution. Noting that the idea of the inevitability of reform of some sort was prominent among public men, he stated that it did not follow that the majority of the electorate favoured it nor that a democratic solution was generally favoured in Parliament.⁷

While certain members of the Liberal party advocated reform in a direction other than towards democracy,⁸

Cranborne feared that Earl Russell and his immediate followers were not of such persuasion.⁹ The prominent Liberals advocate, he said, a policy of democracy "by steps" as each bill would give leverage for further action. He noted that the Radicals such as W.E. Forster and John Bright who stood to gain by this measure also wished to proceed by "steps," each sufficiently small to insure that they would not alarm their allies while gaining enough ground to make their next advance certain.¹⁰ Under a Liberal majority of approximately seventy seats in the Commons, Cranborne feared that strong party ties would sufficiently outweigh reasoning by hard-headed Whigs who were not deluded by "sentimental balderdash."¹¹ He saw that Whigs were being pressured into compliance partially by the fear of being considered deserters and partially by a desire to keep the Conservatives out of office, but largely out of a desire to please some future constituency.¹²

In order to obtain an accurate idea of the goals of the working men he suggested that political leaders not listen to those who speak to legislators to calm their anxieties but rather look to the speeches made by leading working men and to the language employed by popular orators in speeches made to the working classes.¹³ At a recent meeting at St. Martin's Hall, Cranborne noted that working class speakers suggested that their goals with respect to reform included control of the landowners, manhood suffrage,

wage control, equal electoral districts, triennial Parliaments, and the ballot.¹⁴ The popular orators, too, were found to advocate changes which would work to the disadvantage of the propertied classes. For example, he pointed out that Bright and Cobden advocated that all taxation be concentrated on property and that the monopoly on land be attacked as that on corn had been broken.¹⁵ Thus, he believed that forthcoming attempts at reducing the suffrage must be resisted because of the long-range goals of those who were seeking franchise extension.

The Liberal reform bill was introduced to the House of Commons on March 12, 1866, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, W.E. Gladstone.¹⁶ Speaking on the measure in its second night, March 13, Cranborne stated that he felt that the bill was largely the result of intrigues over the past winter between John Bright and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. While he granted that the Government was proposing to reduce the borough franchise to £7 rather than £6 as the Member for Birmingham had advocated, he pointed out that more significantly the Government had chosen to follow the course of action Bright had sought in planning to bring in separate bills for franchise amendment and redistribution.¹⁷ Later, in his April, 1866, article in the Quarterly, he attributed the introduction of the reform issued to "the pressing necessity of purchasing by some concession the votes of the American school in the House of

Commons."¹⁸

In his first Commons speech on this measure, Cranborne was strongly critical of the government for not including redistribution and franchise extension in the same bill, "in order that you may be able to calculate the effect of each upon the other."¹⁹ It was his feeling that some seats would have to be taken from certain places, especially tiny boroughs, and be given to the large unrepresented towns which were swamping many of the counties. He then showed, by use of Government statistics, that a total of 133 seats would have a working class majority.²⁰ He did not feel that this would be unreasonable in itself as there would remain 201 middle-class borough seats. However, he then used the redistribution clauses of Lord Aberdeen's 1854 bill²¹ to show what effect the second part of the reform scheme would likely have. The result, Cranborne found, was that the working classes would absolutely control more than half of the English borough seats.²²

Not surprisingly, then, he supported Earl Grosvenor's amendment that would have forced the Government to include redistribution in the "Extension of the Suffrage Bill." Speaking in favour of this amendment on April 27, he stated that he not only felt that it was necessary to discuss one in relation to the other, but that "everything the supporters of the Bill have said has been really an argument in favour of the amendment."²³ He contended that Gladstone had originally pledged that the seats bill would not be introduced

until the fate of the franchise bill was determined and now they had been told that the seats bill would be introduced and would proceed pari passu with the franchise bill. Thus the Government was admitting, after all, that the Members had a right to have the whole measure before them but would not let them control the whole measure nor admit its original error.²⁴

Cranborne was highly critical of the statistics that the Government had presented to the House in support of their bill. He found that, particularly with respect to information on the counties, there had been no attempt: one, to determine the social position of county voters who had the vote nor of those to whom they proposed to give it; two, to calculate the nature of the freehold constituency; and three, to divide £50 occupiers living in towns from those in agricultural areas. But worse, he thought, although an elaborate table showed the numbers added "if a ten pound, or twelve pound, or a fifteen pound, or twenty pound franchise were adopted in counties," none showed the effect the proposed fourteen pound franchise would have.²⁵

This led him to yet another vulnerable point at which this reform bill could be attacked. Cranborne charged that the actual terms of the bill seemed to have been worked out arithmetically since none of the returns justified such a move nor had they been advocated by any

of the countless schemes proposed throughout the country.²⁶

Auguste Comte's mind was deeply infected with the idea of constructing institutions according to certain numerical relations; and the present Ministry appear to have been studying his philosophy. The borough franchise is placed at seven pounds because it is the exact arithmetical mean between the proposal of Mr. Walpole, who was in favour of eight pounds, and of Mr. Bright, who has been pressing for six; or, symbolically,

$$b = \frac{\text{Bright} + \text{Walpole}}{2}$$

The county franchise is ascertained with equal facility. Mr. Walpole has proposed twenty pounds for the county franchise. Mr. Bright has proposed ten pounds. Then

$$\frac{\text{Walpole}}{\text{Bright}} \times \text{Borough franchise} = \text{county franchise.}^{27}$$

This heir to a landed estate also attacked the bill because of the effect he thought it would have on the agricultural interest. At present, he said, the counties had two grievances. First, he felt that they were greatly under-represented; "sixty or seventy Members ought to be added to the counties if you would bring them up to the level of the boroughs."²⁸ In the Quarterly he used statistics to prove this point.²⁹

Boroughs in England and Wales		
Population	Electors	M.P.s
9,326,709	514,026	331

Counties in England and Wales		
Population	Electors	M.P.s
11,427,655	542,633	159

Second, he pointed out that the numerous unrepresented towns whose electors voted in the counties and the urban freeholders who also voted in the counties almost entirely

swamped the rural interest. These grievances, said Cranborne, were ignored because reformers were not really interested in "equity of the distribution of political power"³⁰ but rather in crippling the agricultural interest.³¹ The proposed bill, he concluded, would further swamp the rural interest as the £14 occupational franchise would enfranchise largely people in unrepresented boroughs who would then vote in the county.³² Finally, he noted that the effect of redistribution on the counties was still an unknown quantity.

Not only did he feel that the effective balance between the county and borough (or the rural and urban interest) would be upset, but he also asserted that the political balance of 1832, which had placed the center of gravity of the Constitution upon the voters who paid an annual rent of between £20 and £10, would be disturbed if the bill became law. He felt that the policy of 1832 "was intelligible enough--whether rightly or wrongly I do not say--to trust to indirect influence from above, and to trust to the enormous influence [of] numbers." Therefore, if any move were made to correct the anomaly that excluded numbers, the anomaly that excluded wealth would likewise have to be corrected.³³

In opposing the extension of the suffrage to the working classes, quite naturally he was forced to answer charges that he regarded the working men as inferior beings.³⁴

His reply was that by nature the working man was no different from any other Englishman; like all other of his countrymen he had his vices. Cranborne continued by stating that "the vices of the poor have unfortunately, a special bearing on their fitness for the exercise of political rights." The problem was, he said, that the working classes had greater temptations than had members of other classes.

It is ridiculous to say that £50 will not tempt a man more of whose income it forms a third or a fourth than one of whose income it forms only the thirtieth or fortieth part; and therefore all bribes whether in the direct form of money value, or in the indirect form of class legislation, must be expected to operate more on the working classes than on any other class of the community. It is not a paradox, but a simple truism, that a man who is hungry will care more for a good dinner than one who has already dined. But, Sir, that seems to me to be the simple truth about--I will not say the working classes, for I dislike to treat any particular vocation as distinct and separate in this community--but as to those who have less property in the country. In proportion as the property is small, the danger of misusing the franchise will be great.³⁵

Cranborne also ridiculed the claim that the bill represented either a final settlement or even a long term one of thirty years as the "final settlement" of 1832 had turned out. He thought that this argument was inconceivable for several reasons. First, he asked who the supporters of the bill were--were they the moderate Liberals, or did they not "come from the ranks of those who have loudly announced their intention of destroying the House of Peers and the Established Church" and who wished to adopt American institutions?³⁶ Second, he found that those who were supporting

the bill outside of the House were advocating more radical reform bills after this one had been passed.³⁷ He believed then that "no sooner have we done that [passed the bill] than the hon. Member for Birmingham [Bright], or, perhaps, some demagogue keener than he who may supplant him, will urge the further claims of the people."³⁸ Thus he felt that the bill was merely a step to future bills which would lead to complete democracy.

Finally, Cranborne made light of all the so-called "pledges" to reform and asked for documents showing proof of such pledges.³⁹ Again he ridiculed the idea that failure to reform would result in an "accident" such as had occurred in France in 1848.⁴⁰ In closing he stated that:

So far as my vote is concerned, I will not vote for this kind of legislation; I will not speculate in the dark; I will not follow a guide who tells me that he is going into an unexplored country, but declines to inform me at least as to its nature or the probable results of the expedition, and who will give me no other information than that he has destroyed bridges behind him and burnt his boats.⁴¹

He implored his fellow Members to be wise in time, to be honest, and to do their duty to their country in resisting this bill to the utmost.⁴²

By July, the Conservatives and the "Adullamites" had forced the Liberals to resign and a Conservative Government with Cranborne as Secretary for India had taken over.⁴³ In the Quarterly of that month, he attributed the raising of the question to Gladstone's attempt to please the Radicals rather than the more moderate Whigs. The Liberal leader

had chosen this former group not because of conviction, as his friends claimed, but because of his "reckless and far-sighted" ambition to hold office for a lasting period of time, "such as the Whigs enjoyed after the death of Queen Anne, and the Tories after Fox's India Bill."⁴⁴ It had been Gladstone's plan, wrote Cranborne, to take advantage of the wide Liberal popularity due to Palmerston to introduce a bill that was just moderate enough to gain support but radical enough to insure that a greater measure would be possible whenever it was desired.

The balance was upset, and no more. Enough was taken for complete mastery; but beyond that point everything that could obstruct the passage of the bill was left for a more convenient season. What was done, however, was done effectively. The working men were placed in secure possession of the boroughs. The supremacy of the large towns over the country districts was carefully preserved. . . . If it had passed, no financial caprice or injustice of Mr. Gladstone's would ever again have met with any obstacle from the resistance of the landed interest. Probably the Conservative Party would have lost at the first ensuing election about a hundred seats. The attack was well planned: if it had been successful, it would have struck a deadly blow.⁴⁵

The results of the session, thought Cranborne, laid down the necessary conditions for the passage of any future reform bill. A measure which would be acceptable, he said, would have to be one which did not involve abdication of the propertied classes nor preponderance or monopoly of power for the working classes. It was only "when the working men and his advocates have become so practical and sincere in their demands for Reform that

they will accept participation without predominance, the 'settlement of the question' will have been attained; but not until then."⁴⁶

Before any real progress could be made, he felt that two fallacies needed to be set aside. First, "the mere passing of any measure, great or small, will of itself secure 'the settlement of the question'."⁴⁷ Though measures such as that of 1832 might cause temporary halts in agitation, the struggle for one class to secure a predominant position would continue. Second, in the face of mounting class agitation, Cranborne restated his belief that the danger of insurrection, threatened by Radicals, was non-existent.⁴⁸ Again he stated that the House of Commons was sensitive to public opinion and therefore revolution was pointless and impossible.⁴⁹

The present question, he felt, was whether or not the new Government should introduce a reform bill. He saw that reform in many areas to correct the "numberless irregularities and inconveniences in the present system" could be considered. Those he listed included: some redistribution from the south to the north of England, certain lateral extensions of the suffrage, vertical extension providing adequate protection against numbers, a remedy for the present system of voluntary registration, forced reduction of election expenses, and an end to travelling expenses for the voters.⁵⁰ This opinion represented a

decided shift from his former view that no bill should be introduced.

Cranborne held that his party's attitude on these questions should be directly related to the strength it held in the Commons. While it would be advantageous, he felt, to secure a moderate compromise, if the Conservatives were to present a measure to a body containing strong adverse forces, democratic amendments would most certainly bring to naught the defeat of the Liberal bill.⁵¹ Thus Cranborne stated that the position of the Government could not be ascertained until the position of the "constitutional" Whigs was clear. He found that the Commons contained three effective groups--Conservatives, Whigs, and Radicals. No group could govern without the support of another. It was Cranborne's wish that a broad Constitutional party could be formed, of Whigs and Conservatives, to secure the existing Constitution through the next two or three years, a period which he felt would be difficult.⁵²

In early fall of 1866 Cranborne urged the Government to issue a Royal Commission to deal with reform; but later he was forced to accept a plan of proceeding by parliamentary resolutions. He wrote to his father on January 9, 1867, to tell him the course of action the Government seemed bent on pursuing.

Last September I urged strongly on Disraeli and on Stanley the expediency of issuing a Commission without waiting for Parliament. Stanley was at that time in

favour of legislation; Disraeli seemed inclined to agree with me, but Lord Derby, I believe, was also then in favour of legislation--impelled, I suspect, by the Queen.

I urged my views as strongly as I could--but without success. However, when we met in November, matters had so far improved that the idea of legislation was abandoned, but Lord Derby still clung to the idea of Parliamentary action of some kind and proposed resolutions in favour of a Royal Commission of Enquiry. This seemed to me a fair compromise. Nothing was decided at the time. But I have very little doubt from the general expressions of opinion that took place that will be the line adopted.⁵³

Through the winter until February this plan of proceeding by resolutions, to be terminated by a Commission of Enquiry to settle the questions that remained, seems to have been adhered to. The final legislation was to preserve the balance of the Constitution by coupling a lowering of the franchise qualification with an increase in the voting power of the less numerous classes.⁵⁴

In February the session began with the Government vague as to the actual terms of the final bill. The resolutions, moreover, did not seem to satisfy any group in an impatient Commons, as they appeared too general and too moderate. Throughout the following month the Cabinet vacillated. On February 16 all previous schemes were abandoned and Disraeli presented to the Cabinet a plan embodying £5 rating and two fancy franchises.⁵⁵ Within three days this plan was scuttled and Disraeli proposed to base the franchise on household suffrage with sufficient counterpoise. He promised to produce the figures the following Saturday (February 23). This was done; however, the

figures offered represented only the overall picture and did not show the effect on any particular constituency. At the same time the redistribution scheme was presented. This was but two days before the bill was to be introduced to the House. Cranborne stated that "loud protests were made by both Lord Carnarvon and myself against this precipitate mode of dealing with so momentous a subject."⁵⁶

Over the following forty-eight hours Cranborne searched through the figures. On explaining his subsequent resignation to the House, on March 5, he stated:

But after we separated on Saturday, the 23rd, I naturally gave myself up to the investigation of these figures. The position was one of extreme difficulty. The materials which I had were, in my opinion, exceedingly scanty. The time which I had for decision was forty-eight hours. On the Sunday evening [February 24] I came to the conclusion that although the figures, on the whole, had a fair seeming, and although it appeared, when stated in block, that upon them the proposed reduction of the franchise might be safely adopted, yet it appeared to me that, with respect to a very large number of boroughs, they would scarcely operate, practically, otherwise than as household suffrage. As soon as I came to this conclusion, I consulted with one or two of my Colleagues, who happened to be near at hand, and then I wrote to Lord Derby to state that, with those figures before me, it was utterly impossible for me to concur in the measure which he proposed.⁵⁷

On Monday, February 25, the Cabinet was hastily summoned and Derby, not wishing to have resignations the day the bill was to be presented to the House, brought forward another lesser bill similar to the one earlier proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.⁵⁸ Within the week party pressure had forced the Cabinet to revert to the larger measure and Cranborne, together with Carnarvon and General

Peel, felt compelled again to offer their resignations.⁵⁹ In the end Cranborne believed that, while it appeared that they had "acted precipitately--that we had consented for a long time to a measure which had been prepared long beforehand, and that then, at the last moment, we had unfairly come forward with our objections," they had followed the only course possible since they could not go along with a measure that seemed to mean effective household suffrage in the majority of the boroughs. They had submitted their resignations at the earliest possible opportunity after the full effects of the measure were apparent.⁶⁰

Approximately a fortnight after the three resignations, on March 18 the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the reform bill.⁶¹ Speaking in the Commons that same day, Cranborne began his attack on the bill of his former colleagues. First, he questioned the Government as to which of two plans it intended to follow with their bill: did they intend "to stand by all its main provisions, and in case these main provisions are not carried through Committee to abandon the Bill" or did they plan to take the House into their confidence and "adopt whatever Bill comes out of Committee?" He felt that the second method would in effect be one in which supporters were asked to "take a leap in the dark"⁶² on the second reading.

Furthermore, he alleged that although Members should know the procedure to be followed in any measure, "in the case

of a Bill the very plan of which is a system of counterpoise and compensation," it was absolutely essential. He then pointed out that the bill would be very much altered if household suffrage were dropped and dual voting retained on one hand, or likewise if the dual vote were dropped and household suffrage retained.⁶³

Cranborne continued by stating his objections to the bill as it stood. It was, he said, "a household suffrage Bill, practically with two compensations." The first compensation, the dual vote, he did not believe would pass, and if it did he regarded it "as inefficient and ineffectual for its purpose." He suggested that the people who would have the dual vote would be massed in the larger towns.

Consequently, while household suffrage will introduce into the middle-sized and smaller boroughs an overwhelming mass of voters, the dual vote, which is supposed to compensate for that reduction, will take effect chiefly in very large towns, where it may affect a few seats, but in all probability very few, being lost in the mass of the population.⁶⁴

The Government statistics, he further noted, were not adequate to display this.

The second compensation, personal payment of rates, he referred to as "most effective--almost too effective--for its purposes--and certain to be swept away." Here the problem was that where rates were compounded a householder would have to pay an additional amount (i.e. personally pay rates) for a vote in one parish while in another where

rates were not compounded, possibly in the same borough, a man in exactly the same social position would gain his vote free. The result would be that the very man who paid extra to vote would demand that his Member eliminate this obligation.⁶⁵ Thus he concluded:

I am quite willing to join in setting up any securities against democracies that may be thought good; but I confess I think that a fence put round a person in whose hands you place a weapon which will surely knock it down is the most futile fence it is possible to set up. . . . Thus you will come to simple undiluted household suffrage.⁶⁶

Previously, Cranborne had attacked reform on the grounds of the evils of democracy. This speech on the Conservative reform bill, however, marked a shift to an attack centered on the political morality of those who only a year previously had turned out a Liberal Government for introducing a bill less radical than the one they now were pressing the House to pass. He claimed that, if it was true that the Conservative party had advanced so far in their opinions over the past year, they were committing political suicide since the electors were not going to support the "sudden convert" over "the long-tried champion." Since Cranborne believed that the end of the present bill was pure household suffrage, he could see no section of the House presenting a more radical bill. Thus he felt it would be better for the sake of party principles and political morality if the Radical section of the Commons were to form the government to pass such an extreme measure.⁶⁷

Cranborne did not speak again on this bill until it reached Committee. Throughout this period he kept in touch with Sir William Heathcote and through him Gladstone and other Liberals who hoped to defeat the Conservative measure. Apart from agreeing with the terms of the Liberal leader's ill-fated "Instruction,"⁶⁸ he appears not to have attempted to secure great political support in either party to defeat the bill.⁶⁹

While the bill was in Committee stage, however, the future Conservative leader spoke on no less than fifteen occasions. He directed his comments largely towards obtaining the most practical and workable bill possible.⁷⁰ On one occasion he supported the clause in the bill which called for voting papers. Through their issue he hoped to minimize election expenses and corruption in the new constituency which would be both poorer and more open to corruption.⁷¹ When the very significant Hodgkinson amendment⁷² was passed and was accepted by the Government without hesitation, he called on Members to think over the great change that had been made:

He [Disraeli] has announced a change of startling magnitude, a change which involves the certain admission, instead of the contingent and doubtful admission, of some 500,000 people to the franchise. Of this policy I express no opinion; but I say it is entirely an abnegation of all the principles of his party. It seems to me that it is not right that changes so enormous should be introduced in a Bill, transforming it entirely from the character which it wore when it was first introduced, without giving to the House and the country more than three hours at least to think over the alteration proposed.⁷³

When the bill came up for third reading on July 15, Viscount Cranborne was the first to speak. Realizing that it was most certain to pass, he began by stating that he did not plan to press for a division but wished to reaffirm his opposition to this measure, which he had uniformly⁷⁴ opposed.

His initial comments were centered on an examination of how vastly the bill of the second reading, which "bristled with precautions and guarantees and securities," had changed. Now at the third reading, he noted that all the checks had disappeared.⁷⁵ Furthermore, he observed that the changes seemed to have been made in accordance with the wishes of W.E. Gladstone, who had made ten demands on the occasion of the second reading:

First, he demanded the lodger franchise. Well, the lodger franchise has been given. Secondly, and this is the only doubtful one, provisions to prevent traffic in votes. Such provisions, however, are to be contained in another Bill, about the probable success of which I know nothing. My impression is that traffic in votes will be one of the results of this Bill. The right hon. Gentlemen next demanded the abolition of obnoxious distinctions between compounders and non-compounders. Not only have obnoxious distinctions been abolished, but all distinctions whatever have disappeared. The fourth demand of the right hon. Gentleman was that the taxing franchise should be omitted. It has been omitted. Fifthly, that the dual vote should be omitted. It has been omitted. Sixthly, that the re-distribution of seats must be considerably enlarged. It has been enlarged full 50 per cent. Seventhly, that the county franchise must be reduced. It has been reduced to something like the point at which it stood in the proposal of last year. Eighthly, that the voting papers must be omitted. To my extreme regret, the voting papers have been omitted. The last two demands were that the educational and

savings banks' franchises should be omitted. These two franchises have been omitted.⁷⁶

Thus he concluded, "the history of this Bill is quite peculiar" and "there is no man in this House of Commons who can remember any Bill being treated in the way that this Bill has been dealt with."⁷⁷

The suggestion that the passing of this bill was a Conservative triumph was, thought Cranborne, a ridiculous delusion. He could not see how Conservatism could have triumphed when it had been forced to adopt the principles of its adversary, and had seen the precautions and securities of the original bill removed at the bidding of its opponents. To him all changes that had taken place in Committee were the result of panic and fear that "the pot was boiling over." He said that "they thus somewhat resemble the men who are bold when no danger is present, but who at the first threat of battle throw their standard into the mud and seek safety in flight."⁷⁸

Again he stated that the results of the changes were unknown to all, that "we are making it [a revolution] absolutely in the dark."⁷⁹ The notion that the overwhelming influence of numbers would be modified by the informal influence of rank and position except in "quiet times and on ordinary questions" was he thought inconceivable. In any great crisis the upper and middle class political leaders would abandon the class to which they belong and, out of fear of losing their seats, cast their votes for

the working classes who control their constituencies.⁸⁰ He felt that the present session offered ample proof of how much Conservative instincts counted when seats were at stake. It was not believable then, that under a new electorate where 1,000,000 working men opposed 500,000 of all other classes, the Member would not support the majority.⁸¹ It was, furthermore, to be expected that the working classes would exercise power for their own interests now that they would have supreme control, as other classes who held supreme control had done in the past. Thus he uttered his last protest against the legislation that was being adopted.⁸²

Finally, he discussed a question on which he felt something could yet be done. He pointed out that the Conservatives had stood against "the advance of democracy."

Now:

the ignominious conclusion . . . [is that] -- the Government of those Statesmen who prompted and encouraged that steadfast resistance--should in the end have proposed a change far more sweeping and extensive than any man had before submitted to the House of Commons. Of all the strange and mysterious marvels which we have seen . . . the most strange is that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have in this House and elsewhere denied that he and his party have changed their opinions.⁸³

He then proceeded to show by use of statements made previously to the House how much the opinions of the sponsors of the bill, Disraeli, Spencer Walpole and Lord Stanley, as well as Sir Stafford Northcote, had been altered over the past two years.⁸⁴

Cranborne also maintained that the action of the

Government was not analogous to that followed by Sir Robert Peel in repealing the Corn Laws, as some Conservatives had been arguing.

Sir, the case of Sir Robert Peel was as different from this as light is from darkness. Sir Robert Peel was menaced by no hostile majority; he broke up an assured majority; he did not continue in office by his own will; he resigned office in the hope that his adversaries would undertake the Government, and it was only when he thought there was an appearance that the country would be left without a Government, that he consented to carry out views in opposition to those he had before held. If Sir Robert Peel had, for five years, urged all his adherents to take the strongest views in opposition to Free Trade--if, up to the very latest year, he had supported those views to the utmost--and if, having done that, he had taken office, and had found, when he did so, that, unless he gave up all his Protectionist views, and introduced Free Trade opinions far stronger than any that had been alleged against him, he must lose office--if, under these circumstances, he had brought in a Free Trade Bill, and had surrounded it with securities--if, under the pressure of his opponents, he had sacrificed those securities one by one--and if, at the end, he had brought in the very strongest measure ever suggested in Parliament, and carried it through the House--if, I say, you could cite such a precedent as that from the life of Sir Robert Peel, then, and not till then, would you be entitled to quote his example as a justification of what has been done by this Government.⁸⁵

He continued by pointing out that British theory of government involved men on each side of the House holding consistent principles in opposition and in office, and was not one in which those in office comply to the wishes of members of the House. If the latter view is to be taken the Commons becomes a "mere scrambling place for office," a practice which honourable men will not follow.⁸⁶

In closing, Cranborne protested most strongly against this what he considered to be lack of morality in politics.

He said that, even if he did not disagree so strongly with the measure,

I still should deeply regret that the position of the Executive should have been so degraded as it has been in the present Session; I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should, above all things, regret that this great gift to the people--if gift you think it--should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party Government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained.⁸⁷

Cranborne's disapproval of Conservative political morality was shared by members of the Liberal party. John Bright, the man who saw in it the acceptance of his program, disapproved of the Tories' abandoning traditional political posture to bring it about.⁸⁸ W.E. Gladstone expressed his views in a letter to Dr. Pusey:

We have been passing through a strange and eventful year: a deplorable one, I think, for the character and conduct of the House of Commons, but yet one of promise for the country, though of a promise not unmixed with evils.⁸⁹

The Liberal Edinburgh Review reiterated many of Cranborne's comments on the Conservative action. It stated that the party had followed its policy of 1829 and 1846 (Catholic Emancipation and Repeal of the Corn Laws) in reversing previous principles but on this occasion it had compounded the evil by being deceitful and passing a measure that was far less moderate than the Liberals had planned to implement. To the Edinburgh the real crisis was brought about by the passing of Hodgkinson's amendment, which was neces-

sary it felt to remove a frivolous security. It agreed with Cranborne that the Government should have resigned on this defeat of an important portion of the measure. The consequence of Disraeli's acceptance of the amendment, it felt, was that initiative passed from the Crown to the House.⁹⁰

In the October issue of the Quarterly, Cranborne reiterated his position on the events of the previous Session in an article entitled "The Conservative Surrender." His biographer and daughter concluded that "the veil of his anonymity had been wearing thin" (in 1866 Gladstone had stated that the author of the Quarterly articles was guilty of "gross plagiarisms" on Cranborne's speeches) and that the authorship of the last article on this question "was no secret."⁹¹

After a short two-page discussion of the measure, he accepted it as a fait accompli, even though he still strongly disagreed with its terms, saying that by tradition "it is the duty of every Englishman, and every English party, to accept a political defeat cordially, and to lend their best endeavors to secure the success, or to neutralize the evil, of the principles to which they have been forced to succumb."⁹² He believed the precedents set would do more harm than the actual legislation could.⁹³ He was again strongly critical of his party's leadership and on this occasion particularly of Derby, for accepting

office holding a certain opinion, and then repudiating that opinion in order to hold office. In addition, he noted that the dishonour was further compounded by the fact that Derby, by his own admission, had planned to desert his opinions "at the very moment when he was being raised to power as their champion."⁹⁴ Cranborne also ridiculed the assertion that the Conservatives had rejected Gladstone's bill because it had not gone far enough and pointed out that "the speeches of Lord Derby, of Mr. Disraeli, of Lord Stanley, of Sir Stafford Northcote, of Mr. Hardy, of Mr. Cairns" all showed opposition to large-scale reduction of the suffrage.⁹⁵

Again, Cranborne reiterated his belief that the party must stand for principle. Quoting from Lord Derby's Upper Chamber speech on the second reading of the bill, he showed that it was his leader's aim to hold office at all costs, while uttering "not a word about his pledges and profession, or the tactics by which his lieutenants had ousted Mr. Gladstone from office."⁹⁶ If this precedent were to be followed, he felt, the Commons would see some "drastic legislation" on the Established Church or on Ireland to "remove all cause for agitation" and "to settle the question."⁹⁷ Furthermore, if Derby's lead were to be followed, the future Conservative leader felt that the Commons would never see a change of a ministry since all measures would be framed to gain a majority and prevent a

Government from being "ousted."⁹⁸ In addition, he suggested that "the House of Commons would decline in authority, and supreme political power will find a new depository" if Ministries sought merely to hold office.⁹⁹

The belief that the question was settled and that no room remained for further agitation was also attacked by Viscount Cranborne. He believed that politics lacked finality as the appetite for change always remained.

If the old leaders of the movement [Radical] are made Conservatives by their own conquests, others, unsatisfied, will step forward to supply their place. What fulfills the ideal of the agitator of today is only 'a step in the right direction,' in the eyes of the aspirant who is preparing to be his successor. When Mr. Bright is preaching moderation and caution, Mr. Beales will be just girding himself for the battle; and doubtless Mr. Beales already numbers among his lieutenants politicians who look upon him as absurdly behind his age. The Girondin always has a Jacobin behind him ready to trip him up; and further back still stands a Hébertist anxious to perform the same service to the Jacobin.¹⁰⁰

Cranborne believed that the general mass of the nation was "conservative" but suggested that it did not follow, unfortunately, that the institutions were secure since "political forces must be estimated by their intensity as well as by their quantity."¹⁰¹ The next attacks would come against the ownership of land in Ireland and England, on the Established Church, and on the present system of education.¹⁰² Conservatives needed to fight and fight hard for what they believed, rather than to "run away at the first charge," not knowing "whether they have lost because they could not win, or because they dared not try to win."¹⁰³

In closing, Cranborne again appealed to his Conservative colleagues to bear the responsibility of being conservative.¹⁰⁴

CHAPTER 4

PARLIAMENTARY OPPONENTS OF REFORM

Cranborne was not alone in his opposition to reform. In 1866 he had numerous collaborators, including all members of the Conservative party and a group of dissident Liberals known as Adullamites. The following year the number of those against reform dwindled and included only a few members of his own party and several leading Adullamites. How did the views of other opponents of parliamentary reform compare with those of Cranborne and what was his relationship to them?

The Adullamites were led by race-horse breeder, philanthropist Earl Grosvenor, who was advised by Lord Elcho and Earl Grey.¹ Its leading members in 1866 were Robert Lowe and Edward Horsman.² This group was formed shortly after the death of Palmerston and set about harassing Liberal leaders, first over debate on the cattle plague, and then gathered strength as the reform bill controversy developed.³ The grand patron of the Cave is said to have been Lord Lansdowne, Lowe's patron in Calne, and it gained the support of Lord Lichfield, a brother-in-law of Elcho.⁴

The motives that drove Members into the Cave were

widespread and numerous. Hatred and suspicion of the new Liberal leaders was one. Certainly many of the aristocratic Whigs distrusted Gladstone but not enough likely to revolt solely or largely for the purpose of blocking his leadership ambitions.⁵ Indeed one Adullamite, Augustus Anson, another brother-in-law of Elcho, stated:

There is but one all-pervading feeling in every Adullamite breast. We are all Liberals and we yearn for Gladstone as our leader. But we cannot stomach either Lord Russell or Bright. . . for Gladstone we have nothing but respect and affection.⁶

Bright's allusion to a cave whose dwellers included "everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented"⁷ also furnishes a clue as to a motive of many of those who revolted. Horsman was one who had held office under Melbourne and Palmerston for a time but since 1857 had been excluded. The son and namesake of the great Sir Robert Peel, like Horsman, had held previous office but was passed over by Russell in 1865, as was the financier Samuel Laing.⁸ None, however, had as great a cause for discontent as had Robert Lowe. This orator justly felt that he should have been given a Cabinet post but was excluded, most likely because of the great personal distaste Lord John held for him.⁹

To Donald Southgate, the historian of nineteenth-century Whiggery, the Adullamite Cave represented a schism in the heart of Whiggery.¹⁰ However, the evidence seems to suggest that it was more a revolt by some segments than

an actual "schism at the heart." Some of the great Whig families had sons in the Cave. Among those in the revolt were Lord Dunkellin, the son of Lord Clanricarde; Charles William Fitzwilliam, a younger son of the Fitzwilliams; Viscount Andover, the heir to the Earl of Suffolk; and Lord Ernest Bruce, the second son of the Marquis of Ailesbury. However, other great Whig families such as Russell, Howard, Somerset, Argyll, Levenson-Gower, Cavendish, Villiers, and Seymour remained loyal to the Liberal leaders.¹¹

Whatever other motives some rebels had in 1866 all were hostile to reform itself or else to the manner the Liberal leaders planned to deal with it. Indeed several had uniformly opposed reform for some time. Lowe and Horsman undoubtedly were sincere in their opposition to reform. William Gregory and Matthew Marsh acquired their dislike for working class enfranchisement from first-hand experiences in democracies, the former in America and the latter in Australia.¹² The official leader, Earl Grosvenor, felt he could support a moderate measure but did not approve of the method of dealing with franchise reform and redistribution in separate bills.

Two leaders, Earl Grey and Lord Elcho, saw the need for a scheme of parliamentary reform which would involve a fundamental change in the Constitution but would avoid what they considered the dangerous practice of piecemeal reform. They felt adequate safeguard against the evils of rising

working class political power could be provided only by cumulative voting schemes, some life memberships in the House of Commons, indirect elections procedures, and other mechanical contrivances. One comprehensive scheme would be required to implement their envisioned changes.¹³

Early in the 1866 session the Adullamites began their moves to defeat the Liberal bill. The man in charge of liaison with the Conservative opposition was Lord Elcho, who probably was given the job because he was a former Peelite. A year previously Elcho had contacted Disraeli on the defeat of the Baines bill and expressed his desire "in all this to act in accordance with your views."¹⁴ On the Conservative side, early in February, Sir Stafford Northcote began to approach Lowe regarding the possibility of forming an alliance with the moderate Liberals while Disraeli approached Horsman. Northcote records that Lowe did not desire formal alliance and that on all issues excepting the franchise he was a radical.¹⁵ Thus Northcote and Cranborne, with whom he discussed Lowe's reply, decided that it would be best to deal with the old Whigs rather than with such troublesome fellows as Lowe and Horsman.¹⁶

Discussions with both groups continued throughout February and into early March; but by then they were centered on the formation of a Third Party made up of moderate Liberals and Conservatives. Negotiations bogged down over the question of leadership. Lord Derby was objection-

able to Liberals. Among those who were thought acceptable were Lord Stanley, Lord Cranborne, and General Peel. Stanley, who was given the most serious consideration, could not obtain sufficient support from the Churchmen; Cranborne was considered too young; and Disraeli would not serve under Peel.¹⁷ To the opportunistic Disraeli formal alliance seemed unnecessary when the rebels were so very anxious to fight their own party colleagues. Thus discussions on a formal alliance were suspended shortly before the bill was introduced.¹⁸

The close association of the Cave with the Opposition became obvious when the rebel leader, Grosvenor, introduced his amendment to the Liberal bill on March 15 and was seconded by Lord Stanley.¹⁹ Debate on this amendment continued until April 27, when the Adullamites, and the Conservatives were defeated by a narrow five-vote margin, 318-313. The Adullamites, who cheered the near-defeat of the Government, gained a moral victory when Gladstone introduced a redistribution bill a week later. Had the Government fallen on this resolution the electorate would have found it difficult to determine whether the Government or its opponents had been the most sincere reformers. According to one contemporary, at this point Lord Russell attempted to convince Grosvenor that popular disturbances could force a Tory Government to capitulate and introduce a less moderate bill.²⁰

The Adullamites were to supply the formula for defeating the Government in June. Popular feeling held that the franchise needed to be placed on a firm foundation that would have at least a degree of permanence to it. Most opponents of the bill regarded the setting of £7 in the boroughs and £14 in the counties as meaningless, and suggested that it would have been equally logical to place the borough franchise, for example, at £8 or £6 or £5.²¹ Moreover, if the franchise were based on the rental value, there seemed to be an assumption that voting was a "right." However, if the franchise were based on the rateable value, it would remain a responsibility granted to those who paid rates for the relief of the poor. The Hunt amendment of June 14, which proposed to substitute rateable value for rental value in the counties and was defeated by only seven votes, paved the way for similar action on the much more controversial question of borough rates. On June 18, Lord Dunkellin's motion to substitute rateable value for yearly rental value in boroughs resulted in Government defeat, 304-315.²²

The defeat of the Liberal Government marked the zenith of Adullamite power. Negotiations with the Conservatives were resumed on the question of the formation of a ministry on an enlarged basis. Cranborne was throughout a strong advocate of forming a government with the "Constitutional" Whigs. Although members of his party were for the

most part, in favour of coalition, certain factors impeded union. One was the exact balance of Whig and Tory. In addition, two of the Adullamites under consideration for Cabinet posts, Lowe and Horsman, were not completely acceptable to Disraeli, as he regarded the latter as a "mauvais coucheur and a troublesome colleague" and felt that the inclusion of Lowe, who would not back any reform bill at all, would give the impression that the ministry had adopted an anti-reform policy.²³ Thus negotiations fell through, and on July 1 a completely Conservative cabinet was sworn in by the Queen. The rank and file cave-man was besieged by a mounting display of constituent agitation in the forms of letters, deputations, and public meetings.²⁴ Over the summer fifteen rebels returned to the party fold and expressed their true devotion to franchise reform.²⁵

Early in 1867, when it became evident that the Conservatives were going to deal with the reform question, the Adullamite leaders called together their followers of the year before and again set about making their faction a powerful independent group. The Cave hoped to play a decisive role in a settlement which would place the franchise on a permanent and constitutional basis. They shared the feeling of the Gladstonian Liberals that the resolutions of February were contemptible and that the "Ten Minutes Bill" was undesirable as it embodied no constitutional principle and provided no safe "resting place."²⁶ On February 28

Disraeli reported that Horsman, for the Cave, intended to introduce another reform bill which would recommend a rated residential, household franchise in the boroughs to be counterbalanced by plural voting.²⁷ This, Disraeli noted, was similar to Derby's original plan that had been shelved because of the threat of Cabinet resignations.

If the Adullamites would support such a scheme Cranborne, Carnarvon, and Peel were expendable. Therefore Disraeli contacted Elcho. At a subsequent meeting of the Cave twenty-five were convinced that they should support the Conservative scheme. Lowe, Horsman, and Gregory found they could not agree and shortly after sought reconciliation with Gladstone.²⁸

The support the Cave gave to Disraeli's measure, while important throughout the first two readings of the bill, was absolutely crucial in Committee when Gladstone introduced an amendment to base the borough franchise on simple £5 rating, whether rates were compounded or personally paid.²⁹ On the defeat of this amendment Disraeli placed the fate of his Government. Twenty-five Adullamites supported the Conservatives, along with fifteen Radical Liberals.³⁰ The Cave followed this course as it wished to see the Government remain in power and accept its "constitutional" plan embodied in a resolution by Earl Grosvenor. All men who had two years' occupation in their homes and who paid £5 or greater in rates were to be enfranchised.

Those who paid less would be forced to compound their rates and thus be excluded. This was to be the safe resting place for the franchise; it was thought fair and uniform and that personal payment of £5 per year retained the principle that the vote was a responsibility. However, Grosvenor and his Cave were ignored by Disraeli after the crucial division, and the motion had to be quietly withdrawn.³¹ Radicals now saw a chance to mould a measure acceptable to them. Thus they supported the Government against moderate discontents; Disraeli accepted their amendments, and the Cave of Adullam ceased to be important.³²

The attitude of one Adullamite who uniformly opposed reform throughout 1866 and 1867 is worthy of special consideration. Robert Lowe, later Viscount Sherbrooke, has been credited by a modern historian with setting out in his speeches "the most comprehensive case against democracy expressed in the House of Commons in the nineteenth century."³³

Lowe, who lived between the years 1811 and 1892, was educated as a commoner at Winchester College and University College, Oxford. Despite extraordinarily poor eyesight he had a distinguished academic career. His distaste for democracy was acquired during a period spent in Australia where, ironically, he acquired the reputation of being a demagogue. He entered the British House of Commons in 1852 and served as Vice-President of the Board of Trade in 1857. In Palmerston's last Ministry he toiled as Vice-President

of the Council but was forced to resign in 1864 by a vote of censure brought against him for manipulation of statistics.³⁴

In 1866 and 1867 his opposition to reform was so extreme that he has been considered a liability to the cause for which he was fighting.³⁵ He had stated that "if you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimidated, or if . . . you want impulsive, unreflecting, and violent people" you enfranchise the working classes. This statement was widely used by Reform League agitators to stir up the unenfranchised.³⁶ Lowe was easy to hate; he was rude, arrogant, sarcastic, and hypercritical of the working man.

Many of Lowe's objections to measures of parliamentary reform that had democratic tendencies were similar to those of Cranborne. Both believed that the Commons was concerned chiefly with questions of finance and that this the current system had "discharged with greater success than any other Assembly,"³⁷ and both felt that in this respect the state should be run like a joint-stock company.³⁸ Lowe, like Cranborne, disapproved of the use of reform as a political maneuver and noted that in 1866 it was desired by no section of the country.³⁹ To the Liberal the notion that any measure large or small would result in a "settlement" of the question was as ridiculous as it was to the Conservative.⁴⁰ The two agreed that working class agitators

would use any gain as leverage to secure further action and that the agitator's ultimate goals were expressed in reform meetings and included wage control, reform in Ireland, and universal suffrage.⁴¹ Like Cranborne, Lowe felt that democracy would mean a decline in the characters of the Members of House and loss of the best leadership.⁴² Finally, both men doubted that American democracy could function in a parliamentary system.⁴³

Although Lowe and Cranborne agreed on many of the probable results of greater working-class representation, Lowe's defence of the Constitution had a different basis. The aristocratic Cranborne grounded his case on the belief that the Constitution possessed balance among classes, and hence he would accept more working class participation only if adequate and acceptable counterpoise to preserve the balance were provided. He feared domination by any class and felt that that of the lowest orders would mean that his country's historic institutions would be destroyed. However, the middle-class Lowe cared little for English institutions but maintained that the ideal was good government, the role of the Constitution to provide "the best machinery we can have for the work we have to do." Since he felt that the working classes were motivated by emotion rather than reason, any change that would put more emotion into the governing processes was to be avoided. Thus he firmly resisted any deviation from the set £10 borough qualification.⁴⁴

Lowe rejected any a priori assumption that all men had a right to vote. He maintained that, since the goal was the best government possible, those who sought to reform the system must point out how it erred. Once the faulty structure was detected, the government should reform in a manner that would render the most efficient system.⁴⁵

Finally, unlike Cranborne, Lowe suggested that the framers of the bill of 1866 would suffer in an ironic fashion, as he believed that the proposed new constituency held Conservative opinions.⁴⁶

When the Adullamites and Conservatives had been successful in turning out the Liberals, Lowe, unlike Cranborne, was immediately suspicious that the new government would introduce a more radical bill.⁴⁷ In an October, 1866 letter to a relative he expressed his fears by saying: "What I am afraid of is . . . your friends the Tories, and, above all Dizzy, who, I verily believe is concocting a very sweeping Bill."⁴⁸ By December, however, he wrote that the picture had brightened and that "I have been trying to persuade the Tories not to bring in a Reform Bill, and have, I think, succeeded. I want to give the country another year to reflect."⁴⁹ He did not succeed and on February, 1867, he spoke against the resolutions the Government had been introducing, denouncing them as fraudulent in that they had nothing to do with the real plan of the Government.⁵⁰

Like Cranborne, Lowe was very critical of the

political morality that had inspired the Tories to form an alliance with anti-reform Liberals like himself, to accept office carrying such a standard, and then to proceed to reverse their opinions when it became expedient to do so:

How was it possible that I, who was daily in communication with the right hon. gentlemen opposite, when they held widely different opinions, could ever have believed that after their declarations last year, and after their condescending to accept from us help they could not have done without, they would have done what they have done. . . . Was it to be conceived that the right honourable gentlemen who had given no indications of the extreme facility of changing their opinions, and lending themselves to the arts of treachery, would, for the sake of keeping a few of them in office for a short time, and giving some small patronage to half-a-dozen lawyers, have been prepared to sacrifice all the principles, all the convictions, and all the traditions of their lives, while others were prepared to turn round on their order, and on the institutions of the country, merely for the purpose of sitting behind those right hon. gentlemen and hearing, with the knowledge that it is all true, language such as that the noble lord (Viscount Cranborne) has used tonight?⁵¹

While Cranborne and Lowe's views on the reform question were remarkably similar, they agreed on very little else. Cranborne was typically high Tory not only in his stand on reform but also in his defence of the Church of England, the House of Lords, and the agricultural interest. Lowe was essentially a radical on all questions other than the franchise.⁵² Sir Stafford Northcote felt that any alliance with Lowe would ultimately blow up on Church questions.⁵³ In 1864 education had proved to be an area in which Cranborne and Lowe were separated by a wide gulf, for the former had forced the Vice-President of the Council to

resign by carrying a vote of censure against him for manipulating statistics against endowed schools.⁵⁴ On economic questions Lowe was an ardent liberal free-trader, partial to middle class interests, while Cranborne quite naturally favoured the landed gentry.

The role of the parties throughout the reform controversy was peculiar. The Liberal party, which traditionally contained the most advanced thinkers and had brought forward the greatest number of previous reform bills, split and caused a House with a Liberal majority of seventy to turn out a Liberal government. The Conservative party, on the other hand, traditionally the one of those who resisted reform, held together the following year to pass a radical bill with very few vocal discontents, despite the fact that the Liberals nominally dominated the Commons. Furthermore, in 1866 the Liberals saw no Cabinet revolt, whereas the following year three important Conservative Cabinet ministers resigned.

Why did Cranborne, Peel, and Carnarvon receive such scanty support from Conservatives?⁵⁵ The traditional answers provide a good explanation for the Conservative "victory."⁵⁶ The effect of the mounting agitation was undoubtedly great; Conservatives and Liberals felt a far greater urgency for concessions to be made than they had the previous year.⁵⁷ Indeed Royden Harrison believes that if there had been no agitation there would have been a

"Cranborne Cave" and the Adullamites would have followed Lowe.⁵⁸ Members also wished that the issue would be laid to rest; in the spring of 1867 numerous speakers expressed a desire that a "settlement of the question" be reached. Household suffrage was considered by many Members as a drastic but inevitable step that would provide some finality. Then too, perhaps Bagehot was correct in suggesting that many Tories simply did not understand the full extent of the measure.⁵⁹ Certainly the changes were made quickly and some were of great magnitude. Tories saw that some of their arch-foes such as Gladstone and Bright at first opposed the bill, and what that pair opposed they felt must be regarded as safe.

Whereas Cranborne believed that the Conservatives were committed to stand against all but the most moderate or safe measures, it is doubtful if the majority of the party agreed completely with him as to what would be considered "moderate" or "safe." When seconding the Grosvenor amendment in 1866, Lord Stanley avowed that Conservatives were not unalterably opposed to reform and that the writer of the articles in the Quarterly Review (Cranborne) did not necessarily speak for the Conservative party.⁶⁰ When the June negotiations with the Adullamites were in progress, Disraeli asserted that a ministry with Lowe as a member would appear too anti-reform "while after all, we may be the men to settle the question."⁶¹

Cranborne had criticized the Government for not making it clear whether they intended to stand or fall by the provisions of the bill. As he feared, Conservative Members committed themselves to the bill in its first and second readings, rightly believing that the measure as it then stood contained adequate safeguards against numbers. As Cranborne said, Conservatives who voted for the second reading took a "leap in the dark."⁶² The vastly changed bill that emerged from Committee was forced upon the rank and file by the party leaders. For reasons already discussed Conservative backbenchers accepted it as it stood, even though they might not have completely approved of it, rather than revolting and therefore leaving the question unsettled.

The Conservative "Cave" lacked large membership because Cranborne, Carnarvon, and Peel did not attempt to form a rebel group, as had the Liberal Adullamite leaders.⁶³ Before Cranborne resigned neither he nor his colleagues had time to lobby with fellow party members in an effort to bring about a revolt. The resignations were given on a matter of principle.

Of Cranborne's two cabinet colleagues that resigned from the Conservative Government with him, General Jonathan Peel was the least significant. As the younger brother of the great Sir Robert Peel, and first elected to Parliament in 1826, he was the elder statesman of the trio. He was,

in fact, a member of an earlier generation. The General had previously served with his brother and with Derby before his appointment as Secretary of War in 1866. Very popular in Parliament, he was regarded as a man who knew the needs of the Army.⁶⁴

In 1866 Peel had spoken in very strong terms against any measure of parliamentary reform. By his own admission he modified his opinions in the course of a year and believed that the Conservatives should bring in a bill, in order "that the question should be settled as soon as possible."⁶⁵ He stated that he went along with the Government until the fifth resolution, which proposed to extend the franchise to household suffrage. Then he said he tendered his resignation as he believed the fifth resolution contradicted the fourth, which stated that no class should predominate. The resignation was then withdrawn, he maintained, as he felt that the rest of the Cabinet was unanimous in favour of the measure. Finally, when he discovered that two of his colleagues had come to the same conclusion entirely on their own, he resigned.⁶⁶ In the debate that followed on the bill Peel played no important role.⁶⁷

Cranborne's other colleague who resigned with him was his friend, the fourth Earl of Carnarvon. Like the heir of the Marquis of Salisbury, Carnarvon had been educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. It was at Oxford that the

two became close friends. The views of both men on such questions as the Church of England, education, Ireland, and the agricultural interest were typically "high Tory." They were never Commons colleagues for Carnarvon succeeded his father in 1849, four years before Cecil was elected. Carnarvon's first office was gained in 1858 when he became Under-Secretary for the Colonies. In 1866 he stepped up to the Secretaryship. Like Cranborne, he was keenly interested in foreign affairs.⁶⁸ The close relationship between the two throughout the controversy is evident; on July 26, 1867 Cranborne asked him to be god-father to his son, "both for auld lang syne and political sympathy."⁶⁹

The courses followed by the two men in 1867 were similar. Carnarvon came out for household suffrage much earlier; however, when he proposed it with sufficient control on November 8, 1866 he was overruled.⁷⁰ It seems that he went along with the Conservative plans until a February 21 discussion with Cranborne revealed that both feared Disraeli's maneuvering them into what would be a bad measure.⁷¹

Like Cranborne, Carnarvon wished to settle the question in 1867 by making some concession to democracy. Indeed he reiterated several times his willingness to accept a large measure.⁷² However, he too feared that the Government bill would effectively give the working classes control of too many of the constituencies.

Although Cranborne never precisely stated the terms of an "acceptable" measure, Carnarvon did:

I should not be afraid to go down to that point which is sometimes said to be the only resting-place--namely, household suffrage--in all those boroughs which exceed a certain limit of population, and to establish a £6 rating franchise in other minor boroughs.⁷³

Carnarvon's attack on the reform bill, expressed on July 22, 1867 in the Lords, was very similar in reasoning and language to that of his colleague. Like Cranborne he believed that no "settlement" was represented by the measure. He elaborated further by predicting that the county franchise precariously placed at £10 would be swept away and that then manhood suffrage would be a reality.⁷⁴ Carnarvon, like Cranborne, believed that the working men needed a share in the government of their country but abhorred any tendencies that would lead to democracy. He felt that in such a system of government the dangers of giving power to one particular class would be apparent in that all legislation would favour that class.⁷⁵ Other similarities to Cranborne included: fear that working class domination would mean more warlike tendencies; suspicion that there would be violent oscillations in foreign policy due to working class domination; and a belief that the House would become only accessible to the rich and to the demagogue while the educated would shirk from participation in government.⁷⁶

Like other 1867 rebels, Carnarvon attacked the

political morality that permitted the Government to follow the course it did. He asserted that the Liberal bill of 1866 had been turned down because it provided inadequate information and because it would tend to enfranchise enough working men to swamp the constituencies. The Conservative bill, he pointed out, was guilty of the same two faults, but to a much greater degree.⁷⁷ He regarded as ridiculous and false the Government's claim that through opposition to independent and Liberal bills it had secretly planned to bring in household suffrage:

For if this indeed were so, if household suffrage really be the secret faith of Conservative Cabinets and of the Conservative party, and has been for years past--if during the time we have been opposing successive Reform Bills as they were introduced, if whilst last year we denounced a £7 rental franchise as leading directly and immediately to revolution, we all the while cherished the hope of a uniform household suffrage--why, my Lords, I would heap ashes on my head, and would acknowledge with all humility, but yet with all sincerity, that the whole life of the great party to which I thought I had the honour to belong was nothing but an organized hypocrisy. . . . it would be far better. . . . to admit at once that there has been a change of opinion.⁷⁸

The course that Carnarvon urged his fellow members to follow was not to force a division but to pass good amendments when the bill entered Committee.⁷⁹

In 1866, then, Cranborne's relationship to his fellow opponents was one in which he as a member of the Conservative party went along with partisan attempts to defeat the Liberal bill. Although Robert Lowe was widely recognized as the leading opponent of reform, Cranborne

gained prominence as the leading Conservative antagonist.

Blackwood's wrote that he had spoken admirably⁸⁰ and the Times felt that he had risen to the party's front ranks:

Lord Cranborne, better known as Lord Robert Cecil, brings ability to the support of the party. Industrious, pugnacious, vigorous and eloquent, Lord Cranborne has since the beginning of Parliament made his way from comparative obscurity into the front ranks of Parliament. His occasional rashness requires to be tempered by experience; but the virtues of prudence and moderation are more possible of attainment than ability which is given only at birth.⁸¹

The following year Cranborne gained recognition as the leading Conservative rebel. Derby felt that if he had remained with the Government, Carnarvon and Peel would have followed suit.⁸²

CHAPTER 5

THE AFTERMATH

I

After "the leap in the dark" Cranborne appeared to be a man whose political future had been eclipsed from one of great promise to the opposite extreme. He evidently commanded few followers and he had publicly expressed total contempt of his party's leadership. The following year when Derby retired from the Cabinet and Cranborne was asked to return, he reasserted his independent position by informing the Government messenger, Sir Stafford Northcote, that his feelings were unchanged.

I told him I had the greatest respect for every member of the Government except one Disraeli, --but that I did not think my honour was safe in the hands of that one.¹

Despite the fact that he never recanted his views of the 1867 affair,² Cranborne did in fact play a very significant role in the leadership of his country. In 1874 as the Marquis of Salisbury he returned to serve under Disraeli in his old office as Secretary of State for India and four years later moved up to the position of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.³ His political career reached the highest possible pinnacle when he

became Prime Minister in 1885-1886 and served in this capacity again on two other occasions, 1886-1892 and 1895-1902.⁴

After the Conservative defeat in the general elections of 1868 Salisbury's political isolation was less pronounced. Serious doubts arose within the party's right wing as to the wisdom of the 1867 act. This strengthened the position of the chief rebel against reform. Furthermore, many other party members felt that the flamboyant Disraeli would not appeal to the new electorate and began to look for other possibilities. In 1870, when the Conservative leadership in the Lords fell vacant because of the death or retirement of Lords Derby (14th), Malmesbury, and Cairns, Salisbury was a strong contender to succeed them. Disraeli's choice, the new Earl of Derby (the Lord Stanley of the Commons), refused the position; Salisbury seconded the nomination of the compromise candidate, the Duke of Richmond.⁵

Disraeli's leadership was decisively strengthened by the Conservative victory of 1874. Salisbury's eminence in the party made him a logical candidate for office. His daughter believed that initially he intended to maintain his resolution never to serve with Disraeli.⁶ However, he was urged to join by all those in whom he had the greatest trust. On February 10, 1874 he wrote to Lady Salisbury and explained the nature of his dilemma.

As long as it was only the Tories--and even Carnarvon--who wanted me to accept office, I did not look upon the matter as serious. But now Sir William Heathcote

writes to me very strongly in the same sense; and he is almost the only man in England whose political judgement in party questions I much respect,--and who hates D. as much as I do. Moreover, the Liberals take the same view. . . . So that if I refuse I am absolutely alone, --and that with the inference, not obscurely hinted, that I refuse out of spite or because I am afraid of a difficult job. . . . I never knew what perplexity was before. On the one side, humiliation and every kind of discomfort; on the other, isolation.⁷

Salisbury was finally convinced to end his alienation from the Conservative chieftain. Heathcote firmly believed that Disraeli would not try any "melodramatic tricks" with a majority of forty-five; his step-mother, by then Lady Derby, personally intervened urging him to join; and Disraeli himself assured him that institutions would not be tampered with.⁸

Throughout the years of the Disraeli ministry relations between its leaders and Salisbury continuously improved. Disraeli proved true to his word that he would oppose further encroachments on the Constitution.⁹ Salisbury, for his part, became increasingly absorbed in external affairs first over India; then after taking over at the Foreign Office he played a large role in the settlement of the problem of Turkey which ended in the Congress of Berlin. His daughter, Lady Gwendolen Cecil, stated that her father believed that Disraeli regarded home and foreign affairs from a fundamentally different point of view. The Conservative leader, he believed, was guided in home politics by personal or party considerations while his attitude in

foreign affairs was governed by conviction.¹⁰ Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that the former antagonists basically agreed as to the course their country should follow in foreign affairs. Relations between the two improved, particularly after 1878 when Derby left the Cabinet and Salisbury was the only man remaining with whom Beaconsfield¹¹ could discuss foreign affairs.

After the Conservative defeat of 1880 Disraeli's declining state of health brought the question of future leadership to the fore. Disraeli himself expressed a desire that Salisbury succeed him.¹² In early 1881 the party was forced to make a decision, when the aging leader died. Salisbury was unanimously elected leader in the House of Lords, but Conservatives were not agreed on who should be overall leader.¹³ For the time he and Sir Stafford Northcote, the leader in the House of Commons, were to act jointly in that capacity. Four years later Salisbury's accession to the leadership of the country was accepted as a matter of course. Throughout the next seventeen years he was the leading Conservative in the country.

II

In "The Conservative Surrender" written in 1867, Salisbury had pledged that he would follow the traditional spirit of English politics by accepting his political defeat cordially and lending his abilities to secure the success or neutralize the evil of the measure which he had so

ardently opposed.¹⁴ He realized that the age of the balanced Constitution had ended and as he stated in the House of Lords "our absolute sovereign is the people of this country."¹⁵ Since democracy was a reality, he did not oppose the Ballot Act of 1872 with any vigor,¹⁶ nor did he oppose the Franchise Act of 1884 on a point of principle.¹⁷

Salisbury's early criticism of bills that would democratize the country's constitution was based on the fact that he considered any such step to be a "leap in the dark."¹⁸ As he asserted at the time, there was really no reliable way to judge whether the results of such a move would be good or bad. Making use of what precedents there were, in America and France, he predicted that the change could mean disaster in several ways. Much of the evil that he foresaw did not, in fact, result. For example, there is no evidence to suggest that the quality of leadership in the years following 1867 deteriorated nor that honourable and able men refused to stand for election by the "mob." While the process of electioneering changed after Gladstone's Midlothian campaign and politicians were required to make mass appeal to the electorate, Salisbury himself adjusted and became quite adept at "stumping" the country. The latter portion of the nineteenth century in fact witnessed the rise of many whom Salisbury recognized as able statesmen, including his own nephew Arthur Balfour, H.H. Asquith, W.H. Smith, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Joseph

Chamberlain. With the exception of Parnell's Irish brigade the number of parliamentarians whom Salisbury regarded as demagogues or "ready-tongued adventurers" did not increase.

It is difficult to assess to what extent Salisbury was correct in believing that a working class majority in most of the constituencies would mean plunder of the wealthier classes through control of taxation.¹⁹ Working-class oriented organizations such as the Reform League attempted to induce working class voters to combine, as Royden Harrison has pointed out.²⁰ This would have been the first step toward control of taxation; but even it failed. As early as 1868 the larger constituencies began to swing toward the Conservative party, a phenomenon that can only be explained by an accession of new Conservative votes.²¹ In subsequent elections this tendency increased. While it may be asserted that the social legislation introduced by the Conservative party indicated working class influence on the Conservative party, it must be noted that Salisbury himself led most of these governments and regarded such action as attempts to improve the lot of the entire country.²²

Salisbury's greatest fear, that in the hands of a working class electorate great historic institutions such as the House of Lords and the Established Church would not be safe, proved incorrect. Working-class England appreciated the virtues of the country's institutions.²³ Salisbury's fear that the Conservative element would be weakened

was erroneous: between 1868 and 1902 a Conservative Government was in power no less than twenty of the thirty-four years. In contrast, during the thirty-four years before the Reform Act Conservatives held power only eight years. While Salisbury would not necessarily have felt safe under a Conservative government such as the one in power in 1867, he was himself Prime Minister for fourteen post-Reform years and a leading minister in the other six years of Conservative rule after the "leap in the dark." It was Robert Lowe, then, who correctly saw that the wider franchise would benefit the Conservative party.²⁴

Before the passing of the Reform Act, Salisbury had stated that he did not believe that the English parliamentary system was suitable to the democratic electorate²⁵ and in 1883 he pointed to the political instability of the period after 1867 to confirm his belief that this was so. He felt that, since the control of the machinery had passed from the hands of an aristocracy to a democracy, the machinery should be revised to fit the characteristics of its new master. The former system had worked well and had been stable because the limited governing class had its attention constantly on politics and its opinions were comparatively uniform. In a democracy, however, the men who control government attend to public affairs only occasionally and fitfully. During the periods between elections, in which most men must concentrate on earning a living,

faction and ambitious maneuvering had full play in the House of Commons and made government difficult. Salisbury pointed out that the American Constitution had maintained stability by a separation of executive and legislative powers.²⁶ However, judging by the longevity of governments after 1867 as compared with the period of the 1850's, Salisbury was incorrect.²⁷

Following the passage of the second Reform Act, Salisbury had predicted that the next "attacks" would come against the ownership of land in Ireland and England, on the Established Church, and on the present system of education.²⁸ In all respects, save that of an assault on the ownership of land in England, his fears proved to be accurate. The control of land in Ireland was challenged by an Act in 1881 which gave tenants "three F's," fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale. However, the Irish Land League was not satisfied and agitation continued. The first onslaught against the Established Church came in 1868 when church rates were abolished. Another ancient privilege was lost in 1871 when the University Tests Act opened all lay posts to dissenters at the ancient universities. Resentment against the ritualists was brought to the fore in 1874 when the Public Worship Regulation Act was passed and threatened to cause internal schism. Vast changes were made in education. In 1870 an act provided for schools to be erected within the reach of every child,

and in 1880, when enough schools made it practical, education was made compulsory. Squabbles on religious teaching among Anglicans, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics made non-sectarian education inevitable.

Salisbury proved to be a reliable prophet in three other ways. First, he was many times proven correct in his disapprobation of the pacifist radicals' view that war was basically aristocratic in nature and could be cured by democracy.²⁹ Second, he had asserted that it was absurd to believe that the passage of a reform measure would settle the question.³⁰ In this he was proven correct in 1872 when the Ballot Act was passed and when the Reform Acts of 1884 and 1885 reduced the county franchise to household suffrage and adopted the radical plank of equal electoral districts. Third, considerable evidence suggests that Members from both sides of the House acted under fear of antagonizing a proposed new electorate, particularly in 1884 and 1885.³¹

III

Late Victorian Conservatism, a curious blend of aristocracy and democracy succinctly expressed in the phrase "tory democracy," was accepted by the Marquis of Salisbury. To a degree, as leader of the party, he followed the Disraelian legacy "that opportunistic pursuit of immediate party advantage was the essence of politics;"³² yet he continued his defence of traditional institutions.

He never permitted expediency to overrule principle. Throughout the final years of the nineteenth century the terms he used to defend the country's institutions were those which he had used when he defended the Constitution. The constant themes of his political philosophy were dislike of class antipathy, careful practical reform, defence of property, and belief in a Constitutional party.

Salisbury's later Conservatism was grounded on his belief that great changes were imminent and inevitable, and that "we are entering on an epoch of sharp contention, in which the country will need all the strength that can be given to it by the union and energy of the Conservative party." Evidence of the need of the "vigilance and energy of those who love their country and its institutions" was found not only in the policy of the statesmen who were in the Government but particularly in the fact that men were accepting such a policy. It was his belief that "we need to restore, not laws or arrangements that have passed away, but the earlier spirit of our institutions which modern theory and crotchet have driven out." He affirmed that the object of his party, which, he said might be termed Constitutional by its instinct, was not to maintain the status quo. Salisbury felt such a policy would not succeed, and that there was much that had become obsolete.³³

His great fear was that the present state of affairs had caused and was leading to greater disintegration.³⁴

The power of the House of Commons to dismiss a government at a moment's notice led to this situation. He suggested that immediately before a crucial division certain groups of Ministerial supporters extorted promises from the Ministry on the threat of forcing its resignation.³⁵ Salisbury believed that this would continue as long as the Liberal party was composed of Radical and Whig elements. He pointed out that it was hopeless to believe that with a few more concessions the Radical wing would "rest and be thankful."³⁶ Their only definite policy was one of "progress." If one looked far enough down the line in which their "progress" was aimed he would realize that what they desired was equality.

They wish for equality among religions: and the tendency of their school is to attain it, not only by stripping all religious bodies of endowments, but also by the extirpation of all dogmas which make a distinction between one body and another. They wish for equality among individuals: and therefore they are opposed to all honour or privileges which are transmitted by inheritance. From the same desire they are opposed to all inequalities of property: and by the action of taxation, of succession laws, and of sundry other devices borrowed from the Socialist armoury, they hope to attain an absolute level, first in the ownership of land and afterwards in all other kinds of ownership.³⁷

While this was the Radical program, Salisbury noted that it was incompatible with that of the Whigs, which had been inherited from the eighteenth century and included recognition of the advantages of individual freedom, the sacredness of property, and prejudices in favour of the Established Church and the House of Lords.³⁸ However, as

Whigs they were also compelled to be members of the great Liberal party. Salisbury sarcastically implored Whigs to leave the Liberal party since it had abandoned its former principles.

It may seem to many, who are not born within the circle to be a grievous fate; and their submission to it may be a matter, not only of admiration, but of surprise. But what is to be done? They are born Whigs; they must remain Whigs, and vote with their party,--whoever leads it, and wherever it may be going. Descent and ancestry have their obligations; the tyranny of caste is not unknown even in the West.³⁹

Finally, he urged Whigs to show patriotism beyond that of wishing to see their own side win and to rid themselves of the fatalistic attitude of believing that "the institutions of the country, the endowments of Established Churches, the rights of property" were doomed regardless of their actions.⁴⁰

When a large number of Whigs split from the rest of the Liberal party in 1886 over Home Rule for Ireland, Salisbury did all that he could to attach them to the Conservative party. No doubt he realized the possibility of reconciliation with the Gladstonian Liberals following the precedent set in 1867 when the Adullamites returned to the Liberal party after the Conservatives had dealt with reform. To forestall this he was willing to surrender his leadership and in fact offered the Prime Ministership to the Marquis of Hartington on two occasions: first, when the Liberals were defeated in July, 1886, and again, when Lord Randolph Churchill resigned from the Cabinet in December of the same year.⁴¹ Although Hartington personally refused to enter a

Conservative cabinet until 1895,⁴² a capable Liberal Unionist, G.J. Goschen, occupied a position in the Conservative front bench after December, 1886 as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. By admitting the Unionists to his Cabinet Salisbury strengthened the conservative cause by gaining numbers, Whig influence in the country, and considerable first-rate talent.

Salisbury did not agree with contemporaries who felt that the House of Lords should act as a rubber stamp on the legislation passed by the other House to avoid agitation that might lead to its extinction. It was his belief that the Upper House would be of value only as long as it could be strong and independent. In 1872 he urged the Lords to turn down the Ballot as he felt they did not agree with it. He asked them to demonstrate that they were an independent Assembly.⁴³ The function of the Lords, he asserted, was more than that of sober second thought on hasty legislation; it must stand as a bulwark against governmental action that was brought about by party deals. He did not feel that the Commons reflected "the cool and deliberate judgement of the generality of the people" in a democracy where the electors had very little time to follow the affairs of state.⁴⁴ Thus the role of the Lords was to see that legislation mirrored the real needs and wishes of the country.

This holder of an ancient title wished to strengthen the Upper Chamber by making it more representative of all the nation.⁴⁵ In 1869 he supported Earl Russell's Life

Peerage bill, which would have given a maximum of twenty-eight peerages for life to distinguished men too poor to burden their heirs with titles.

We belong too much to one class, and the consequence is that with respect to a large number of questions we are all too much of one mind. Now, that is a fact which appears to me to be injurious to the character of the House as a political assembly in two ways. The House of Lords, though not an elective, is strictly a representative assembly, and it does, in point of fact, represent very large classes in the country. But if you wish this representation to be effective, you must take care that it is sufficiently wide, and it is undoubtedly true that, for one reason or another, those classes whose wealth and power depend on commerce and mercantile industry do not find their representation in this House so large or so adequate as do those whose wealth and power depend upon the agricultural interest and landed property. . . . We want, if possible, more representatives of diverse views and more antagonism. . . . There are a vast number of social questions deeply interesting to the people of this country, especially questions having reference to the health and moral condition of the people--and on which many members of your Lordships' House are capable of throwing great light, and yet these subjects are not closely investigated here because the fighting power is wanting and the debates cannot be sustained.⁴⁶

In 1888 Salisbury himself introduced a Life Peerages bill which would have had the same result, but felt compelled to drop it when parliamentary business became too congested. Nevertheless, he inaugurated the creation of industrial and commercial peerages in 1885 when Henry Allsopp, a large brewer, was made Lord Hindlip. In subsequent ministries he continued this policy.⁴⁷

Maintenance of the Established Church was to Salisbury an important element in Conservative party policy. He opposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1868 but

felt compelled to acquiesce before the measure of the following year as the election had been fought and won by the Liberals on that issue.⁴⁸ His policy throughout was to preserve the Church as an integral part of England's heritage. In 1874 his main prerequisite for returning to office was that Disraeli and the Government promise to bring no legislation against the ritualists. He explained his reason in a letter to Lady Salisbury, February 15, 1874.

We then went and interrogated Derby. I went through all the possible questions I could think of; and his answers were satisfactory on all points except one-- and that was the question of special legislation against the Ritualists. On that he was too vague and I said that I must communicate on that point with the chief himself; for that though I had no fancy for the idiots themselves, any attack on them would certainly break up the Church of England.⁴⁹

His commitment to the church and to the church-oriented endowed schools impelled him to agree to the Free Education Act of 1891. One reason he wanted a Conservative Government to bring in free education was his fear that if the Liberals sponsored it, they would place education on a non-sectarian basis.⁵⁰

Salisbury viewed the prevalent disorder in Ireland as the fruit of misguided Liberal policy.⁵¹ He believed that the problems were not the result of religious differences and pointed out that the Catholic threats of 1715 and 1745 had caused no disturbance in Ireland. The real difficulty, he felt, had arisen over land ownership, and the policy of surrender by steps had whetted the appetite of

the Irish peasants.⁵² Salisbury feared that drastic steps were required to solve this deteriorating situation and considered that it might be necessary to turn the ownership of land over to the peasants. In France the possession of land had made the peasants a strong Conservative force and he hoped a similar phenomenon would occur in Ireland. Such drastic action could only be taken, he maintained, if adequate compensations for loss of property were made to the Irish landowners.⁵³

In 1886 Salisbury appointed Carnarvon as Viceroy of Ireland. When his colleague held several negotiations with Parnell regarding Home Rule, the suggestion was made that the Conservatives planned to "dish the Whigs" on Home Rule in similar fashion to that followed by Derby and Disraeli in 1867. Parnell made several public statements to this effect and Lady Gwendolen Cecil admitted that it was possible.⁵⁴ Such a course of action on the part of Salisbury seems doubtful as it would have been too much against his firm political principles. The man who had been such a vehement critic of "dishing of the Whigs" in 1867 would certainly have received a roasting from his own party and from the entire country if he had accepted Disraeli's opportunism two decades later. Furthermore, he rejected any steps that would give Ireland political home rule as he feared that serious defence problems would be raised with an independent and possibly hostile nation in such proximity.⁵⁵

During Salisbury's administration many acts embodying great measures in the field of social legislation were passed. One such was the Workmen's Compensation Act; others included an Education Act, Irish Land Act, Coal Mines Act, and a Local Government for Ireland Act. For the most part the Prime Minister did not take an active role in promoting such measures as he was usually absorbed in foreign affairs. Others, notably Joseph Chamberlain, paid more attention to domestic affairs. However, as the leader of the government Salisbury could not have disapproved.

On one occasion he led the agitation that was directed against "the appallingly crowded and unhealthy state of London tenement houses and the misery and vice which flowed from it" by contributing a signed article to the National Review.⁵⁶ In the 1884 Session he moved the appointment of a Royal Commission on Housing and subsequently sat on it with Sir Charles Dilke, the Prince of Wales, Cardinal Manning, and G.J. Goschen. For his part in the legislation that followed, he was accused by Lord Wemyss⁵⁷ of having betrayed Conservative principles in favour of socialism. In his reply Salisbury revealed that he wanted public resources to be used for the benefit of the entire nation rather than for the benefit of any one class:

My complaint of the doctrine which the noble Earl preaches with so much eloquence in this House is that it is deformed throughout by a serious ambiguity of expression. The word "Socialism" in his hands has a great many different meanings. Usually he employs it simply as a synonym for robbery, as a term which means

taking what belongs to one man and giving it to another. I need not say that, in so far as my noble friend uses it in that sense, I entirely concur with him in all his denunciations. . . . But then, that is not socialism in the sense in which my noble friend has applied the term to such a measure as the unfortunate one of mine, which he is so fond of criticizing, or many other proposals of the present day. Socialism in that sense is the application of the power and resources of society to benefit, not the whole of society, but one particular class, especially the most needy class of that society and the main commandment of the gospel preached by my noble friend is "Thou shalt not use the public resources to benefit the poor."⁵⁸

Thus Salisbury objected to Radical programs because they were geared to one class. A man who believed that class distinctions were a reality, he nevertheless denied that the interests of the various classes were separate and antipathetic to each other.

Salisbury felt that the Conservative party should be the one that gave confidence to capital by standing for the sanctity of property and of contracts.⁵⁹ Throughout his career he believed that the entire country benefited when the government provided industry with the opportunity to expand. Salisbury claimed that his imperial policies were geared to acquiring new territories, not for the sake of "painting the map red" but to enable the British economy to expand further.⁶⁰ Throughout his lifetime, he was critical of radical schemes to impose restrictions on industry as he felt that it would languish and that subsequently all of his countrymen would suffer.⁶¹

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that Cecil's Conservatism remained consistent throughout his career. In the Burkean tradition the defence of the Established Church, of individual freedom, of private property, and of organic change were important to Cecil in the era before the second Reform Act and in the period of a democratized Constitution. His defence of the political order established by the 1832 Reform Act was brought about by a dislike of disrupting continuity with the past and a fear that a working-class dominated electorate would not appreciate the inherent values of English institutions.

His position with respect to parliamentary reform did not remain the same throughout the sixties but rather changed with the political realities of the day. Prior to 1866 he opposed introduction of any franchise bill on the grounds that it would set trends for further action that would eventually mean democracy. In that period, 1860-1866, there was very little agitation for reform in Parliament or in the country. In 1866, however, agitation was an increasing reality and he felt compelled to offer support to any scheme that would include sufficient permanent counterpoise against the impact of numbers. He held this

point of view until he resigned from the Government in March of 1867. By then agitation had much increased and most members of both parties favoured settlement of the question on what they hoped would be a permanent basis. They felt any permanent settlement must go far enough to satisfy the majority of the agitators. Realizing this, Cecil opposed the measure on the ground that for the sake of party principle the Radical element in Parliament, which had long advocated such a course, rather than the Conservative party, ought to sponsor such a scheme.

There is considerable intellectual interest attached to the case Robert Cecil presented against democracy. Although many of the disastrous consequences that he attributed to the "leap in the dark" did not occur, he foresaw some of the problems that democratic government has brought. Other charges that he made against democracy are less easy to evaluate. His allegations that democratic government produces weak foreign policy, irresponsible electioneering, and debasement of political life remain subjects of debate in the twentieth century.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Robert Cecil will be referred to throughout by the name or title he was known by at the time of the event being discussed.

²Also spelled Cranbourne. Even Hansard used both forms. Throughout, the form Cranborne will be consistently used.

³Lord Hugh Cecil, Conservatism (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), p. 48.

CHAPTER 1

¹G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 39.

²Ibid., p. 43.

³Reasons commonly cited include the poor leadership of O'Connor and others, lack of a single purpose, absence of parliamentary backing, strong opposition from established orders, improving economic conditions, and fear that the revolutions of 1848 might spread to England.

⁴Kitson Clark, p. 33.

⁵J.B. Connacher, "Party Politics in the Age of Palmerston," 1859: Entering An Age of Crisis, ed. Philip Appleman, William Madden and Michael Wolff (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1959), p. 170.

⁶Kitson Clark, p. 47.

⁷W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 68. See also Kitson Clark, p. 43.

⁸Asa Briggs, "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth Century England," Essays In Labour History, ed. Asa Briggs and John Saville (London: Macmillan, 1960), p. 73.

⁹Kitson Clark, p. 48.

¹⁰Charles Seymour, Electoral Reform in England and Wales (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1915), p. 23.

¹¹Ibid., p. 28. This led to a decline in the number of working class voters.

¹²Ibid., p. 52.

¹³Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 97-98.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 61, 75, 96-97.

¹⁷Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel (London: Longmans and Green, 1953), passim. See also Trygve R. Tholfsen, "The Transition to Democracy in Victorian England," International Review of Social History, VI (1961), 154.

¹⁸Seymour, p. 155. In 1867 it was found that there were 70,116 compounders at or above £10. All were excluded by the terms of the 1832 act.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 41.

²⁰Ibid., p. 44.

²¹Conacher, p. 171.

²²Donald Southgate, The Passing of the Whigs, 1832-1886 (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 231. Conacher (p. 171) says that Russell was "personally ambitious to have his name associated with ... a settlement."

²³W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (6 vols.: London: John Murray, 1916), IV, 179.

²⁴"Fancy franchises" was a term which applied to voting qualifications granted for a university degree, a certain amount of money in a savings bank, or membership in a profession.

²⁵The Annual Register for 1859 (London: Longmans, 1860), p. 54.

²⁶The annual rental value was the amount a tenant paid in yearly rent while the yearly rateable value was the amount the occupier paid for the relief of the poor. The Liberals

based their bills on the rental value; the Conservatives used the rateable value.

²⁷The Annual Register for 1864 (London: Longmans, 1865), p. 145.

²⁸Above, pp. 6-7.

²⁹Conacher, pp. 179-180.

³⁰The Annual Register for 1852 (London: Longmans, 1853), p. 145.

³¹The Annual Register for 1860 (London: Longmans, 1861), p. 98.

³²Joseph H. Park, The English Reform Bill of 1867 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1920), p. 987.

³³Ibid., p. 23.

³⁴Francis H. Herrick, "The Second Reform Movement in Britain," Journal of the History of Ideas, IX (April, 1948), 189.

³⁵Southgate, p. 275.

³⁶Ibid., p. 296.

³⁷Above, p. 14.

³⁸Park, p. 93.

³⁹Monypenny and Buckle, IV, 402.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 424. See also Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 80.

⁴¹Park, p. 35.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 59-62.

⁴³Ibid., p. 75.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁴⁷The 1860 bill had proposed that the county franchise be lowered to £10.

⁴⁸ Borough electorate		New electors (£7)	144,000
1865	514,000	Compounders, etc.	60,000
County electorate 1865.	542,000	New County electors	172,000
		Depositors, etc.	24,000
Total electorate		Total new	
1865,	1,056,000	electorate,	400,000
Total prospective electorate,			1,456,000
Of these, artisan voters enfranchised,			200,000
Of these, artisan voters already on lists			126,000
Total number of prospective artisan electors			326,000

Thus the working classes would have formed 40 per cent of the borough electorate and about 23 per cent of the total electorate. Seymour, p. 251.

⁴⁹This bill was of a moderate nature; no constituency was to be completely disfranchised.

⁵⁰A rateable value of £7 would have been greater than an annual rental value of £8. See Seymour, p. 256.

⁵¹Park, pp. 106-109.

⁵²Ibid., p. 120.

⁵³Ibid., p. 122.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 125.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 121, 125.

⁵⁶Andrew Lang, Life Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddesleigh (2 vols.; London: Blackwood, 1890), I, 263-264.

⁵⁷Royden Harrison (pp. 78-136) maintains that historians have underplayed the role of mass agitation. He points out that the agitation provided by the Reform League and the fear of its threat of "direct action" forced men to make concessions to avoid disaster, and that in fact the Reform Act was made necessary by the agitation.

⁵⁸G.E. Buckle (ed.), The Letters of Queen Victoria (3 vols.; Toronto: Ryerson, 1926), I, 378.

⁵⁹The dual vote was given up during the second reading.

⁶⁰Park, p. 195; Seymour, pp. 258-259. For a general

discussion on the effects the original provisions of the bill would have had, see Homersham Cox, A History of the Reform Bills of 1866 and 1867 (London: Longmans, 1868), pp. 108 ff.

⁶¹In this attempt Gladstone was defeated by his own party (the "Tea-Room Revolt") before he ever brought it up in the Commons. In Committee he proposed an amendment embodying the same provisions. Twelve Radicals, 8 "Tea-Roomers," and 25 Adullamites voted against him and aided the Government to defeat the amendment of the Liberal leader.

⁶²The lodger qualification had been part of the Liberal bill of 1866.

⁶³Seymour, p. 270.

⁶⁴Great Britain, 3 Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, CLXXXVI (March 25, 1867), 477. Hereafter simply cited as Hansard.

⁶⁵Seymour, p. 281.

CHAPTER 2

¹[Robert Cecil], Bentley's Quarterly Review (July, 1859), quoted in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury (4 vols.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), I, 85.

²Hansard, CLI (July 26, 1858), 2119.

³Hansard, CLXXXIV (June 8, 1866), 74-75.

⁴Hansard, CLIII (March 21, 1859), 478-479.

⁵[Robert Cecil], "The Conservative Reaction," Quarterly Review, CVIII (July, 1860), 282. Second and subsequent references to articles written by Robert Cecil will be simply cited as Quarterly together with the date.

⁶[Robert Cecil], "The House of Commons," ibid., CXVI (July, 1864), 263.

⁷Ibid., pp. 263-264.

⁸Ibid., p. 264.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 265.

¹¹Ibid., See also [Robert Cecil], "Parliamentary Reform," Quarterly Review, CXVII (April, 1865), 565.

¹²Quarterly, CXVI (July, 1864), 266.

¹³Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 268-269.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 247-248.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 248.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 257.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., p. 271. However, Cecil found one part of the 1832 settlement based on theory: "With the exception of the unhappy adoption of a uniform suffrage of 10l.--one of the most infelicitous ideas that ever issued from Lord Russell's brain--not a single line in our representative institutions betrays the stiff hand of the theorist."

²²[Robert Cecil], "The Budget and the Reform Bill," Quarterly Review, CVII (April, 1860), 539. The phrase "a leap in the dark" is generally attributed to Lord Derby when in 1867 he was explaining the effects of the Conservative bill to the House of Lords. However, Robert Cecil used it in 1860 and several times in subsequent years.

²³Quarterly, CVIII (July, 1860), 281. Above, pp. 14-15.

²⁴Above, p. 12.

²⁵Quarterly, CVIII (July, 1860), 285-286.

²⁶Quarterly, CXIII (April, 1865), 540.

²⁷Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 551.

²⁸[Robert Cecil], "Democracy on its Trial," Quarterly Review, CX (July, 1861), 249.

²⁹[Robert Cecil], "The Confederate Struggle and Recognition," ibid., CXII (October, 1862), 543.

³⁰Quarterly, CX (July, 1861), 260-261.

³¹[Robert Cecil], "The United States as an Example," Quarterly Review, CXVII (January, 1865), 266.

³²Quarterly, CX (July, 1861), 283.

³³Ibid., pp. 283-284.

³⁴Quarterly, CXVI (July, 1864), 269-270.

³⁵Quarterly, CX (July, 1861), 261-262.

³⁶Ibid., p. 262.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Quarterly, CXVII (January, 1865), 280-281.

³⁹Ibid., p. 281.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 283.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 284-285. Cecil declared that: "again and again in almost every contemporary vindication of the Federal cause, the dogma is broadly laid down that the majority must rule. The grievance of the Confederates, that during a period of half a century the numerical majority of the North has systematically used its power to divert trade and prosperity from the South, to Federal advocates seems to be beside the question." (p. 285)

⁴²Ibid., p. 285.

⁴³Quarterly, CXII (October, 1862), 557.

⁴⁴Quarterly, CX (July, 1861), 266.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 269.

⁴⁶Quarterly, CXII (October, 1862), 559.

⁴⁷Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 541.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 551

⁴⁹Quarterly, CX (July, 1861), 274.

⁵⁰Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 533.

⁵¹Bright and Cobden were well known for their pacifist ideas.

⁵²Quarterly, CXVI (July, 1864), 279-281.

⁵³Quarterly, CXII (October, 1862), 544-546.

⁵⁴Ibid. Lord Robert, however, covered himself against charges that he was pro-slavery: "We are very far, indeed, from implying any admiration of slavery by these remarks. We are only pointing out the political influence which, as a matter of fact, the institution exerts--its one virtue amid a thousand crimes. It produces a very effective--though, on many accounts, a very objectionable--form of aristocracy; and for political purposes the community in which it exists presents all the characteristics of an aristocratic constitution." (p.555).

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 547.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Quarterly, CXVI (July, 1864), 273.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 273-274.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 274.

⁶⁰Quarterly, CXVII (January, 1865), 270-275.

⁶¹Quarterly, CXII (October, 1862), 538.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Quarterly, CXVII (January, 1865), 275-279.

⁶⁴Above, p. 12

⁶⁵Quarterly, CVIII (July, 1860), 301.

⁶⁶Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 145. Lord Robert actually voted for the 1859 bill but his daughter suggested that it was against his better judgement.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Quarterly, CVIII (July, 1860), 302.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰[Robert Cecil], "Parliamentary Reform," CXVII (April, 1865), 554-555.

⁷¹Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 543. See also [Robert Cecil], "Four Years of a Reforming Administration," Quarterly Review, CXIII (January, 1863), 286.

⁷²[Robert Cecil], Bentley's Quarterly Review (July, 1859), quoted in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 44-45.

⁷³Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 548.

⁷⁴Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 86.

⁷⁵Quarterly, CVII (April, 1860), 553. See also Quarterly, CVIII (July, 1860), 296.

⁷⁶Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 96.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 98.

⁷⁸Quarterly, CXVII (April, 1865), 561-563.

CHAPTER 3

¹In June of 1865 Robert inherited this courtesy title from his older brother.

²[Viscount Cranborne], "The Elections," Quarterly Review, CXVIII (July, 1865), 287.

³Ibid., p. 289.

⁴Ibid., pp. 291-292.

⁵Ibid., p. 293.

⁶Ibid., p. 295.

⁷Viscount Cranborne, "The Coming Session," Quarterly Review, CXIX (January, 1866), 256.

⁸Ibid., p. 257. Above, pp. 76-77.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 258.

¹¹Ibid., p. 259.

¹²Ibid., p. 260.

¹³Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 263-264. Another demand was "that the poor man's daughter, who was worked twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours a day, should have to go abroad and view the face of nature."

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 265-268.

¹⁶For particular details of the bill, see above, pp. 18-19.

¹⁷Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 225.

¹⁸[Viscount Cranborne], "The Reform Bill," Quarterly Review, CXIX (April, 1866), 531.

¹⁹Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 227-228. See also Quarterly, CXIX (April, 1866), 539.

²⁰Quarterly, CXIX (April, 1866), 538. Cranborne listed which boroughs would be transferred to political control of the working classes. He explained (pp. 536-637) that he considered everyone who paid an annual rent of £7-£10 as artisans (i.e. working class). Then he added this number to the number of working class voters already on the lists which he said had been drawn up by the Government. It seems that in no instance did Cranborne explain exactly where the dividing point was between the working classes and the middle classes.

²¹Above, pp. 12-13.

²²Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 227-230. See also Hansard, CLXXXIII (April 27, 1866), 18. In the second speech Cranborne used the 1858 redistribution bill Bright introduced: "In 1858 he [Bright] introduced a Bill for that purpose, in which he proposed to disfranchise 140 boroughs. But by disfranchising ninety boroughs only you would transfer the majority of the whole House, under the £7 franchise, from the middle to the working classes."

²³Hansard, CLXXXIII (April 27, 1866), 11.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 11-14.

²⁵Quarterly (April, 1866), 533.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 533-534.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 535-536.

²⁹Ibid., p. 536.

³⁰Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 226-227.

³¹Quarterly, CXIX (April, 1866), pp. 535-538. See also Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 226. Cranborne said the "golden link" in Gladstone's career was his "persistent, undying hatred of the rural interest."

³²Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 227. Cranborne also suggested that the £50 leaseholders would be enabled to vote in the county as well as the borough, thus further swamping the rural interest. However, he was corrected by Gladstone, who said they would not vote in the county if they already had a vote in the borough.

³³Ibid., pp. 230-231.

³⁴Above, pp. 82-87.

³⁵Hansard, CLXXXIII (April 27, 1866), 10.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 20-21

³⁷Ibid., p.22.

³⁸Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 234.

³⁹Hansard, CLXXXIII (April 26, 1866), 20.

⁴⁰Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 235. Above, p.32.

⁴¹Hansard, CLXXXIII (April 27, 1866), 24.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Above, p. 79.

⁴⁴[Viscount Cranborne], "The Change of Ministry," Quarterly Review, CXX (July, 1866), 266-268.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 268-269.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 272-273.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 273-274.

⁴⁸Above, pp. 32, 55.

⁴⁹Quarterly, CXX (July, 1866), pp. 274-276.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 277-278. A "lateral" extension would give the franchise to middle and upper class men who did not qualify under existing laws. The lateral extensions were usually "fancy franchises" and provided qualification for

holders of a university degree, members of professions and learned societies, and those who had a certain amount in a savings bank. Vertical extension meant a direct lowering of the terms of existing qualifications (for example, £10 rental in boroughs to £7 rental).

⁵¹Ibid., p. 279. Note how accurate this prediction proved to be.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 280-282.

⁵³Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 212-213. Lord Derby expressed agreement in a February 25, 1867 letter to the Queen. See G.E. Buckle, pp. 399-400.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 223.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 230.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 230-231.

⁵⁷Hansard, CLXXXV (March 5, 1867), 1349. The letter sent by Cranborne to Lord Derby is reproduced in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 233-234.

⁵⁸Above, p. 22.

⁵⁹Above, p. 22.

⁶⁰Hansard, CLXXXV (March 5, 1867), 1350.

⁶¹Above, pp. 22-23, for details of the bill.

⁶²Above, p. 31.

⁶³Hansard, CLXXXVI (March 18, 1867), 84.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 85-86. There was a third "compensation," a two-year residential clause. Cranborne felt its effect would be very small.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 86-87.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 87-88.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 88-89.

⁶⁸Gladstone's "Instruction" contained two basic points: one, to accept all payment of rates; and two, to excuse all householders below £5 from rating and therefore exclude them from the franchise.

⁶⁹In the third week of April Cranborne suffered personal sorrow when a year-old daughter died of pneumonia. This may have interrupted his attempts to defeat the bill.

⁷⁰Above, p. 70. Cranborne said the duty of Englishmen involved helping to neutralize evil effects of any legislation regardless of personal feeling toward it.

⁷¹Hansard, CLXXXVIII (June 20, 1867), 190-194.

⁷²Above, p. 24.

⁷³Hansard, CLXXXVII (May 17, 1867), 756.

⁷⁴Hansard, CLXXXVIII (July 15, 1867), 1526.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 1526-1527.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 1527-1528.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 1528-1530.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 1530.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 1531-1532.

⁸²Ibid., p. 1533.

⁸³Ibid., p. 1534.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 1735-1737.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 1537-1538.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 1538.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 1539.

⁸⁸Herman Ausubel, John Bright, Victorian Reformer (London: John Willey, 1966), p. 158.

⁸⁹John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone (2 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1922), I, 870.

⁹⁰"The Session and Its Sequel," Edinburgh Review CXXVI (October, 1867), 541, 565-566.

⁹¹Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 272.

⁹² [Viscount Cranborne], "The Conservative Surrender," Quarterly Review CXXIII (October, 1867), 534-535.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 535.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 536.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 537-538.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 547.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 548.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 551.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 552.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 557.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 558.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 559.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 542.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 564-565.

CHAPTER 4

¹ Earl Grosvenor (Hugh Lupus) became 1st Duke of Westminster in 1874. Lord Elcho (Francis Wemyss-Charteris) had been a Peelite; in 1883 he became the 10th Earl of Wemyss. Earl Grey (4th) was the son of the 3rd Earl Grey who passed the 1832 measure.

² Edward Horsman, a Scottish M.P. who gained the reputation of being a man of very independent mind, made the speech that prompted Bright to call him and those like him dwellers in "what may be called his political Cave of Adullam."

³ James Winter, "The Cave of Adullam and Parliamentary Reform," English Historical Review, LXXXI (January, 1966), 38, 40.

⁴ Southgate, p. 313.

⁵ Ibid., p. 299.

⁶ Winter, p. 45.

⁷I Sam. 22: 1-2.

⁸In 1865 Laing was thought to be the logical choice as Chancellor of the Exchequer because of his financial background both in and out of the House, but was passed over in favour of the younger George Goschen. Laing was not a completely committed Adullamite as had been thought. On all divisions after the one on the Grosvenor motion he voted with the Liberal party.

⁹Above, p. 83.

¹⁰Southgate, p. 314. See also G.M. Trevelyan, The Life of John Bright (London: Constable, 1913), pp. 356-357.

¹¹Winter, p. 48.

¹²Ibid., pp. 44, 49.

¹³Ibid., pp. 49-50. The scheme was concocted by Earl Grey who described it in his book, Parliamentary Government.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 39. See also Monypenny and Buckle, IV, 432.

¹⁵Lang, I, 230.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 238. See also Monypenny and Buckle, IV, 429.

¹⁸Winter, p. 41.

¹⁹Ibid., Winter states, citing the Iddesleigh Papers, that Derby himself drafted Grosvenor's amendment.

²⁰Spencer Walpole, Life of Lord John Russell (2 vols.; London: Longmans, 1889), II, 412.

²¹Above, p. 51, for Cranborne's views.

²²For division, see Hansard, CLXXXIV (June 18, 1866), 639-643.

²³Lang, I, 261.

²⁴Above, pp. 19-21.

²⁵Winter, p. 52. See also Monypenny and Buckle, IV, 508.

²⁶For the Liberal point of view see Bright's speech; Hansard, CLXXXV (February 24, 1866), 966-974. It was felt that the "Ten Minutes Bill" was very similar to the Liberal one of the previous year.

²⁷G.E. Buckle, I, 403. Letter from Disraeli to Queen Victoria.

²⁸Winter, p. 53.

²⁹The terms of this amendment were similar to Gladstone's "Instruction" which had been turned down by the "Tea-Room Revolt". Above, pp. 23, 64.

³⁰See Hansard, CLXXXVI (April 12, 1867) 1699-1703, for division. Lowe, Horsman, Sir Robert Peel, Laing, Capt. Hayter were some Adullamites who supported Gladstone along with Radicals Bright, Baines, Ayrton and Conservatives Cranborne, Heathcote, and Beresford Hope. Adullamites voting with the Government included Earl Grosvenor, Elcho, Hunt, Marsh, Lord R. Montague.

³¹Winter, pp. 54-55.

³²On the important Hodgkinson amendment many Adullamites including Lowe, Horsman, Elcho, March abstained. When the measure was given third reading Elcho stated that what had happened was inevitable and that there really was no safe resting place between £10 and household suffrage.

³³Asa Briggs, Victorian People (London: Odhams, 1954), p. 248.

³⁴Dictionary of National Biography (21 vols.; London: Smith Elder, 1909), XII, 196. Hereafter cited simply as DNB.

³⁵Winter, p. 41, and Briggs, p. 245, believe that Lowe was a liability while his biographer Patchett Martin, Life and Letters of the Right Honorable Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke (2 vols.; London: Longmans, 1893), II, 298-299, expresses the opposite point of view.

³⁶Hansard, CLXXXII (March 13, 1866), 147-148.

³⁷Ibid., p. 155. Above, p. 30, for Cranborne's views.

³⁸Ibid., p. 163. Above, pp. 29-30, for Cranborne's views.

³⁹Ibid., p. 147. Above, p. 31, for Cranborne's views.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 149. Above, pp. 54-55, for Cranborne's views.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 152-153. Above, pp. 54-55, for Cranborne's views.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 156, 159. Above, pp. 40-41, for Cranborne's views.

⁴³Ibid., p. 158. Above, p. 30, for Cranborne's views.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁷Martin, II, 308.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 309.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 310.

⁵⁰Hansard, CLXXXV (February 25, 1867), 953.

⁵¹Hansard, CLXXXVIII (July 15, 1867), 1548.

⁵²Above, p. 77.

⁵³Lang, I, 255.

⁵⁴Cranborne, or Robert Cecil as he was then, claimed he did not intend the motion to be one of censure. A subsequent Select Committee of Inquiry on which Cecil sat vindicated Lowe's conduct but Palmerston did not give him another Cabinet post.

⁵⁵Only Cranborne's cousin, Beresford Hope (the publisher of the Saturday Review), Sir Reginald Knightly, and Sir William Heathcote lent vocal support to the Conservative "cave."

⁵⁶Briggs, pp. 298-300.

⁵⁷Above, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁸Harrison, p. 136.

⁵⁹Briggs, pp. 300-301.

⁶⁰Hansard, CLXXXII (March 15, 1866), 1164.

⁶¹Lang, I, 261.

⁶²Above, p. 31.

⁶³Above, p. 74.

⁶⁴DNB, XV, 652-653.

⁶⁵Hansard, CLXXXV (March 5, 1867), 1346.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 1346-1347. See also Earl of Malmesbury, Memoirs of an Ex-Minister (2 vols.; London: Longmans, 1884), II, 366.

⁶⁷He spoke only twice.

⁶⁸DNB, IX, 646.

⁶⁹Arthur Hardinge, The Life of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert: Fourth Earl of Carnarvon (3 vols.; London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1925), I, 359.

⁷⁰Ibid., I, 337.

⁷¹Ibid., I, 345.

⁷²Hansard, CLXXXV (March 4, 1867), 1290-1291.

⁷³Ibid., p. 1290.

⁷⁴Hansard, CLXXXVIII (July 22, 1867), 1838.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 1836. Above, p. 29, for Cranborne's views.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 1837.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 1833-1834.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 1841.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 1845-1846. The only successful amendment of note was one sponsored by Lord Cairns which reduced the number of votes per elector in a three-member constituency from three to two.

⁸⁰"The Condition of the Government," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, XCIX (April, 1866), 533.

⁸¹The Times (London), July 6, 1866, quoted in F.S. Pulling, Life and Speeches of the Marquis of Salisbury (2 vols.; London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1885), I, 67.

⁸²Buckle, I, 404.

CHAPTER 5

¹Lady Gwendolen Cecil, I, 291. Letter to Lord Carnarvon, February 27, 1868.

²Carnarvon in contrast later felt that he had been overly upset about the possible results of the Act.

³The fifteenth Earl of Derby resigned after a dispute with Disraeli and the majority of the Cabinet on a matter regarding policy toward Eastern Europe.

⁴Salisbury took office in 1885 after Gladstone had been defeated by a vote of censure but had to relinquish it to the Liberal Leader in January of 1886 after a defeat in the general election. He resumed the post in July after Gladstone's defeat on Home Rule.

⁵E.J. Feuchtwanger, "The Conservative Party Under the Impact of the Second Reform Act," Victorian Studies, VII (June, 1959), 291-293. Feuchtwanger logically points out that the very fact that the anti-Disraeli Salisbury was considered demonstrated the weak position of the Conservative leader.

⁶Lady Gwendolen Cecil, II, 43.

⁷Ibid., p. 44.

⁸Ibid., pp. 45, 46, 49-50.

⁹Clyde J. Lewis, "Theory and Expediency in the Policy of Disraeli," Victorian Studies, IV (3), 254.

¹⁰Lady Gwendolen Cecil, II, 202.

¹¹Disraeli had been elevated to the House of Lords in 1876 as the Earl of Beaconsfield.

¹²W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, VI, 595.

¹³Lady Gwendolen Cecil, III, 41. See also Viscount Chilston, "Lord Salisbury as Party Leader, 1881-1902," Parliamentary Affairs, XIII (1960), 304.

¹⁴Above, p. 70.

¹⁵A.L. Kennedy, Salisbury, 1830-1903 (London: John Murray, 1953), pp. 140-141.

¹⁶Above, p. 107.

¹⁷Salisbury saw that the franchise bill was held up in the Lords for a sufficient length of time to insure that the Liberals did not introduce a redistribution scheme that would give them permanent advantage.

¹⁸Above, p. 31.

¹⁹Above, pp. 38-39.

²⁰See Royden Harrison, "The British Working Class and the General Election of 1868," International Review of Social History, V (1960), 424-455 and VI (1961), 74-109.

²¹See I.G. Jones, "The Election of 1868 in Merthyr Tydfil: A Study in the Politics of an Industrial Borough in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Journal of Modern History, XXXIII(3), (1961), 270-286.

²²Above, pp. 111-112.

²³W.L. Burn, "British Conservatism," Nineteenth Century, CXLV (1949), 10-11, 67.

²⁴Above, p. 85.

²⁵Above, p. 31.

²⁶Lord Salisbury, "Disintegration," Quarterly Review, CLVI (October, 1883), 567-568.

²⁷Above, p. 14.

²⁸Above, p. 72.

²⁹Above, p. 42.

³⁰Above, p. 72.

³¹Above, pp. 66-67. See also R.B. McDowell, British Conservatism, 1832-1914 (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 87.

³²F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press, 1963), p. 220.

³³Quarterly (October, 1883), pp. 561-562.

³⁴Ibid., p. 562.

³⁵Ibid., p. 569.

³⁶Ibid., p. 575.

³⁷Ibid., p. 574.

³⁸Ibid., p. 578.

³⁹Ibid., p. 579.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 581.

⁴¹Bernard Holland, The Life of Spencer Compton, Eighth Duke of Devonshire (2 vols.; London: Longmans, 1911), II, 171, 178-183.

⁴²As the eighth Duke of Devonshire he served as the Lord President.

⁴³Lady Gwendolen Cecil, II, 25-26.

⁴⁴Quarterly (October, 1883), pp. 572-573.

⁴⁵The essayist Walter Bagehot also called for reform of the Lords while it was still able to reform itself. Bagehot, like Salisbury, supported the creation of life peerages as one means of making the Upper Chamber more representative of the nation. See The English Constitution (London: Kegan Paul, 1991), p. 122.

⁴⁶Hansard, CXCIV (April 9, 1869), 463-464.

⁴⁷Thompson, pp. 293, 295. See also R.E. Pumphrey, "The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study in the Adaption of a Social Institution," American Historical Review, LXV (1959), 1-16.

⁴⁸Lady Gwendolen Cecil, II, 23.

⁴⁹Ibid., 47. When the Public Worship Regulation Bill was subsequently introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Lords, Disraeli was forced by pressure from the Queen and the Church not to oppose it. Salisbury spoke against the measure but a threatened rift between him and Disraeli never developed.

⁵⁰Ibid., IV, 158.

⁵¹Quarterly (October, 1883), p. 563.

⁵²Ibid., p. 583.

⁵³Ibid., p. 594.

⁵⁴Lady Gwendolen Cecil, III, 150.

⁵⁵Quarterly (October, 1883), p. 594.

⁵⁶Lady Gwendolen Cecil, III, 77.

⁵⁷The Lord Elcho of the Adullamites. Above, pp. 74, 77.

⁵⁸Hansard, CCC (July 31, 1885), 651-652.

⁵⁹McDowell, p. 136.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 106.

⁶¹Quarterly (October, 1883), p. 576.

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